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MRS RYAN, SENIOR.

A Comedy Drama

In Three Acts

By

Hannah Levinsohn

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Characters:

Michael Ryan.

Mrs Ryan.

Donald Ryan.

Norine Ryan.

Mary Ellen. Mr Ryan's sister.

Barbara Illington. Don's fiancee.

Mrs Illington.

Archie Files.

Act I.

Scene: Dining room of the Ryans on Washington Heights. The furniture is modern, such as one would expect to find in a middle class home.

Time: The present, about five thirty of an evening in August.

As Curtain rises, Mary Ellen Ryan, a spinster, abo forty five years of age, is discovered setting the table.

Phone in hall rings.

Mary E (Calls) Nora! Answer th e phone, will ye!

Nora (From other room) All right.

(During conversation on phone Mary E. tries to listen as she sets table.---Conversation is short.--When finished Norine, more often called Nora by members of the family enters. She is a fine type of the modern girl, about twenty years of age.

Mary E. Bab?

Nora Yes. She wants a ticket for her mother.

MaryE. Well, we've got that extra one Don's friend gave him.

Nora Yes, but would mother let her have it? You know she would'nt.

MaryE. So, what did you say to her?

Nora The quickest lie I could think of. I told her mother gave it away to some one, I did'nt know who.

Mary E. It's a damn shame the way that girl's been treated.

Nora I'm sorry for Bab; but then you can't blame mother so much.

Mary E. Oh? Can't you? Well, now you listen to this: Suppose a nice young fellow like your brother Don fell in love with you, you'ld throw him over just because your mother wanted you to, would'nt you? Like fun you would If you did, you'd have the brains of a nit-wit. An' suppose he was getting his diploma from law college, like Don's gettin' his to-night, I'll bet your mother would expect to be there.--Gimme the napkins out o' the drawer.--(As Nora opens drawer)--I wish I'd answered that phone.

Nora (As she hands Mary E. the napkins)--I'm glad you did'n If you told Bab she could have that ticket, well, you know what would happen.

Mary E I know what's gonner happen when your mother gets in I'm gonner tell her a few things.

Nora Aunt Mary Ellen! You know what this evening means to Dad. Don't go and spoil it for him. Don't start anything here to-night. Please, don't.-----(Bell rings)---There's mother now!

Mary E No, it ain't! It's only five thirty and it's Daisy's day off.

Nora Well, I'm here. ---(She goes to door)---

Mary E Sure! How could I have managed if you did'nt hand me those napkins!

Nora (From hall) Forgot your keyes again!

Don (Coming through hall) Yes. I left them in my tuck last night.

(Don is a tall fine looking young man, about twentyfour As he enters Mary E is about to go to kitchen.)

Don Wait a minute,aunt Mary.-----(Mary E turns to him)---
Who'd you give that ticket to?

MaryE (Looks up at him) What you talkin' about? I did'nt even see wh at the ticket looks like.

Don (To Nora) You told Barbara aunt Mary gave the ticket to some one, you did'nt kn ow who.

Mary E What! you little-----

Nora I could'nt help it, aunt Mary. I--I really could'nt. I did'nt want her to---(She turns to Don)--You understand don't you, Don?

Don Yes. I think I do,--and mother will understand to-night that Bab and I are engaged.

Mary E (Coming back into room)--Don't start anything to-night, Don. You don't want us to g o to your graduation looking like a bunch o' pall bearers, do you?-----(Bell rings)--Maybe that's her now!

Nora Go to your room, Don. I'll try and pave the way for you a little.

Don Don't you think I can---

Nora Yes. Another time perhaps, but not when she comes in all tired out from a shopping tour.

(Bell rings again.--Nora runs out.)

Mary E (As she goes to door)--Go on,Don. Go on in.It's the best bet.

(Don goes to h is room.--Mary E goes to kitchen)

Mrs R (From hall, coming into room)--I'm ready to drop, and y you keep me waiting till you're good and ready to open the door.

(She enters, carrying a number of packages. She drops them on a ch air)

Nora Why carry all that? Why did'nt you have it sent?

Mrs R That's right! Rub it in good. --You know darn well I've been buying all my stuff on the East Side ever since frigidairs came into existense.

Nora (Picking up a package that dropped on the floor)--That's right too; b ut then, why did'nt you let me go with you? I wanted to.

Mrs R It's Daisy's day off, and I wanted you to help your aunt (A deep sigh)--If only every one were as considerate as I am!--(She takes off hat, hands it to Nora)--Is supper ready?

Nora I--I--suppose so.--Listen, Ma. Now, don't go up in the air----

Mrs R (Sensing something)---Suppose you give me a chance to g get my breath before you---And if you're going to say something that will rile me,don't, if you know what's good for you. There's a little of my blood on every one of those packages. You know how those store keepers down on Division Street ask you five dollars for a waist and sell it for two, but not till you've talked yourself blue in the face and walked to the door five times--and get pulled back each time. Now count those packages and see for yourself what I've been through this after noon. So don't pile on any more,not if you want me to go to your brother's graduation to-night looking like half a human being.

Nora That's just it, Mom. You see, I---

Mrs R Open that box,Nora. I want you to see that waist.It's worth the five he asked for it;but the poor devil told me he did'nt have but two sales the whole day,so he cut it down to two dollars and a quarter. I was sorry for him, so I took it.--(As Nora takes up the box)--Well! Open it, why don't you!

Nora (Holding the box,but not atteapting to open it) I--I suppose you know Bab's going to be at the exercises?

Mrs R Yes.--Yes, I know. Open the box.--(Phone rings in hall. Mary E answers it)--I'll bet that's Mrs Bradley. I promised her that extra ticket.--(She calls in loud tone)--Mary Ellen, If that's Mrs Bradley asking for the ticket tell her she can have it.

Nora Bab wants one for her mother.

Mrs R She does, does she? Well, what she wants and what she's goin' to get--that's two different things altogether. (Enter Mary E.)

MaryE For you, Nora.

Nora Who is it?

MaryE He did'nt say, and I did'nt ask.

Nora (Going to door)--It's just like you.

Mary E She's got 'em bad to-day. Something seems to be itching her.

Mrs R She's tired, I guess. She always is on Daisy's day off.

Mary E (Wiping the swet from her face) Yes. Poor thing! She must be, but I notice she ain't sweating like me.

Mrs R You know she never sweats.

Mary E (With sarcastic look and tone) No, she never does.

Mrs R (Looks at Mary E a moment) My! You look almost boiled.

Come over here and sit down a little while. Now, don't tell me you have'nt got the time. Norine can take care o' whatever there is on the stove.

Mary E Sure she can.

Mrs R And she will. I'll see that she does.---(She calls loudly)--Norine! Norine!

Nora I'm at the phone,mother.

Mrs R Yes, I know. Well, cut it short. Aunt Mary Ellen is very nearly boiled with the heat of that kitchen. Now you go in an' finish what's there to be done.

Nora (From hall, in angry tone)--All right, all right. I'll be through here in a moment.

Mrs R (To Mary E) Come on! Sit down and cool off. It must er been awful hot in that kitchen to-day.

Mary E (Sitting down)--It was anything but frigidair,I can tell you.--An' speakin' o' frigirair, Michael's is thinking o' surprising you with one.--I'm telling it to you, because I'm thinking th e surprise will end up in a cala mity, the way you feel about them.

Mrs R You're thinkin' righ t, Mary Ellen. If he ever tried to put---The man must be crazy. Him sellin' ice fer the last twenty years, an' those frigidairs come along! They took the bread an' butter righ t out of our mouths.--If that brother o' yours is sane, I'm----

Mary E Crazy, to be sure---(Smiles sweetly)--I mean--<u>You</u> know what I mean; but what's the use of harping on that. You got something up your sleeve. I can see it by the way you're acting. Come on, let's have it.

Mrs R All right. We'll get it over with while we're alone. I

know you hate it when the kids butt in.--(She squirms in her chair for a few moments)--You know, Mary Ellen, I been thinkin' ----

Mary E Yes---

Mrs R By the way, what time did Daisy go?

Mary E I let er go right after you left. The kid had a date,and she was awful nervous to get out.

Mrs R Then you and Nora had all th e work to do?

Mary E Yep. Me an' Nora.

Mrs R (Looking around the room) Everything looks all right, an I suppose supper's all cooked?

Mary E Sure.

Mrs R Of course, you do look sweatty, but then, it's an awful hot day.

Mary E Say, you're givin' me the jim-jams! What are you drivin' at?Mrs R

Mrs R Suppose--Now, don't get me wrong---What I'm really doing now is just trying to get a little advice from you.

Mary E (Looking at Mrs R out of the corner of one eye)--You re trying to get e little advice from me?

Mrs R Yes, just that.

Mary E (Repeats)--Just that! Well, go ahead. Advice is about the cheapest thing I know of.--I'll give you all you want.

Mrs R You know, poor Mike got an awful time, a hard time, makin ends meet now. You there's five of us---

Mary E Oh! So that's it! You don't have to say any more. I know now what's it all about.--Well, you've been polite enough about it, but you might er waited till to-morrow, till after the graduation.--(She rises with a determined air)

Mrs R If I thought you'd be that upset about it,I would'nt have-
You're justplike your brother. You fly off the handle for
no reason at all.

MaryE (After biting her lips)--No reason at all, eh! Just be-
cause you did'nt pack my valise an' put it at the door;
but it means the same thing, does'nt it?

Mrs R (In shocked tone)--Mary Ellen! You don't really think I
meant---Gosh! I can't believe you really think I'm that
low, that I would turn you out o' my house. Why, you was
as good as a mother to my children for all these years,
an' you've been a sister to me too.--Yes, you bet, even
if we do squabble once in a while.But don't real sisters
do that? Of course they do.---She puts her arm around
Mary's neck)--I'm awful sorry I put such a notion into
your head; but it's your own fault for letting such a
ridiculous thing to enter your mind. Ridiculous is to
small a word for it.

Mary E Well, if you did'nt always ring the back door bell,
when you want to get in the front way, this would'nd happe
Now, what under the sun are you tryin' to tell me?

Mrs R I was'nt trying to tell you anything .I was trying to ask
you, what you would think about sending Daisy away. You
know, she's quite an expense. Her wagws an' her food.

Mary E Yes. Her wages amount to something, but her food! She
ain't a big eater.

Mrs R Not when you're lookin', but you try an' find a piece o'
stale cake in this house.Not when Daisy's around! And then
there's her room. We could th at appartment across the ha
hall. It's fifteen dollars less. Quite an item, is'nt it?

I tell you, it would take quite a load off Mike? shoulders Don't you think so?

Mary E Yes.But you been doing th e bossing around this house all along.--Why,all of a sudden, ask me?

Mrs R Because--because th ere'll be extra work falling on your shoulders.--Of course, there will be some extra work for me and for Nora.You know that.

MaryE I don't know about you an' Nora; but it's all right with me,so long as it'll take a little load off of Michael. I know he's been worryin' a lot lately.

Mrs R You don't know the half of it.

MaryE I suppose I don't,but I can see YOU do---judging from all these bundles.

Mrs R I saved about twenty dollars, buying then the way I did.

Mary E You'd a saved about seventy five, if you did'nt but 'em at all.

Mrs R Now,Mary Ellen! Be reasonable. We just got to have some things.

Mary E Sure,--an' Michael's got to have head-aches.

Mrs R He'll have a lot less to worry about now.--I wonder if he'll appreciate what I'm doing for h im.--You know, men are all like that. The never see the good a woman does for them.

Mary E Well, Michael's near sighted,an' he never did wera the right kind o' glasses.

Mrs R You should'nt say that.--You know I---(Hall door is heard closing)---Here's Mike now! Everything's fine, an' we'll let it go at that.

(MaryE grabs up th e bundles, is about to exit. Enter Mr R

(Mary E tries to pass him)

Mr R Wait a minute, Mary Ellen. I've got something to show yer (He is carrying a small, flat package)--Where's Nora? I want ye all ter see this at one time. I want ter see the look in yer faces, when---(He shouts)--Nora! Nora! Where are ye, darlin'?

Nora (From kitchen) I'm right here in the kitchen. I'll be with you in a jiffy.

MrsR (Impatiently)--Well, well open the package, why don't you? You've got me all excited now. Come on, open it!

Mr R Now, now, stop dancing like a Jack-in-the-box. Nora will be in in a minute,an' ye'll all see it together.--(He looks at Mary E.)--Mary Ellen, ye look like an express wago Put yer load down so I can see yer face,when I---(Mary E is about to exit by hall door)--Throw 'em down there on that b ig chair.

MaryE (About to go in) I'll be back in a minute.

Mr R Ye're s$ayin' right h ere.--Throw 'em down there.

(Mary E throws packages on chair)

Nora (Enters, mopping her face with a handkerchief) Gee, but it's hot in th at kitchen!

MaryE I'll betcha, and sh e's sweatin' all right, ain't she, Margaret?

(Mrs R looks up a moment at Mary E, then back at package) Mr R is untying th e package. Mrs R is watching him. Before he removes the cover,he looks up at his wife,then at Mary E,then at Nora.--His eyes sparkle, his face is beaming with joy and pride as he spreads open the paper and brings to view a ten inch sig n-plate.---Mrs R looks

at it, draws a deep breath,then reads"Donald Ryan, Attorney at Law".--She looks up at her husband a moment, then drops her head on his shoulder, sniffles a moment.

Mr R What ye're crying about?

Mrs R (A sob in her tone) Oh, Michael, that we lived ro see this day! Our boy a lawyer! It's too grand for words.

Mr R An' it's grand in me heart, Margret.--I kin tell you, many's the night I laid awake, picturing this. An' then all of a sudden a cold shiver would come all over me, with the fear, that maybe it would'nt come true.--Yes, it's true! It's truem an' I thank the Lord for it.

Mrs R You worked hard for it, Michael.

Mr R He's worth it.--Don's a fine lad.

(Mrs R sniffs.---- Mary E looks at her)

Mrs R (To Mary E)-- Don't you smell something?

Nora Great Scott! I left th e pie in the oven!--(She rushes out)

Mr R And on a celebration day like this! And maybe it's mince pie.--It is! It is! I kin see it in Mary Ellen's face.

Mary E That's just what it is.

Mr R You mean, what it was.

Mary E (As she goes to door) There might be something left of it yet.

Mr R If it is, my nose ain't speaking the truth.--(Exit MaryE Aw, but I don't care. Nothing kin rile me now, not with the eyes in me head lookin' at this.--(He takes up the sign again, stands looking at it, as one would look at a shrine.)

Mary E (Calls from kitchen) It's all right, Mike. It ain't so bad. It's only th e top crust that's gone.

Mr R (Calls back) It's all right,Mary Ellen! It's all right. Who cares about the top of anything! It's the inside that counts every time.--(As Don enters)--Hello, son! I did'nt know you was here.

Mrs R I did'nr either.

Don (To mother) Did'nt Mom tell you?

(Mr R takes a peek at th e sign, then looks at Don and smiles)

Mrs R Tell me what?

(Mr R is about to hold th e sign up so Don can see it, slips it behind his back again, waiting for the chance, when it will prove more effective)

Don She--she--said she was going to speak to you about--about---

Mrs R About what?

Don About a ticket for Bab's moth er. I think it is only right don't you, Dad?

(Mr R is too absorbed in th e grand surprise for his son. He looks up a moment, as if he kbew what Don had said)

Mr R Oh! Yes--yes, sure.

Mrs R (Shocked) What! --(She looks at her husband, sees blank look in his face)--Why, you don't even know what he was talking about!

Mr R (Scratching his head) Well, maybe I don't; but whatever it is, it's O.K. with me this day.--(He is swinging the sign behind his back,looking at Don,the light of love and pride in his eyes.)

Mrs R Michael! It migh t be that way with you ,but I got something to say around here too.

Mr R (Coaxingly) Now, Margret,this is a g reat day for all of us. A day of rejoicing. Don't go an' spoil it, darlin'. Whatever it is,it will keep till to-morrow, won't it?

Mrs R No,it won't! It can't! Don't you understand?

Mr R I don't want to understand anything but this.--(He smiles serenely, as he draws sign from behind his back and holds it up before Don's eyes.--Don looks at the sign, but one can plainlt see, there is something else on his mind)

Don Dad, if you did'nt hear what I said before, I want you to listen now.--Bab wants to take her mother to the exercises to-night. Do you th ink she is asking too much?

Mr R No, son. I don't think so.

Mrs R You don't think so! Well,I do!

Mr R Will you tell me why---

Mrs R Michael Ryan! If you could ever see fyrther than your own nose, you would'nt be in th e position you re in now.

Mr R Well, since you kin see so far ahead o' ye, tell us what you see.

Mrs R (Shaking h er head in anger) It's too provoking to have to tell you th ings you ought to know yourself.--You know jus as well as I do,everybody's got it cut and dried that Don and Barbara Illington are keeping steady company.

Mr R Well, ain't it so?

Mrs R Yes,but any of our friends that'll see her mother there to-night will---Well, take it from me, before we know it, they'll have the date set for his wedding.

Mary E (From kitchen) Supper's ready.

(Nora enters with pitcher of waterX

Nora (Placing pitcher on table)Come on,sit down.Everything's ready.

Mr R All right, deary.

(As Don is about to turn to table, Dad taps him gently on shoulder, looks at him lovingly and smilesX

Mr R You did'nt tell me what you think of this,son.--(He holds up the sign)

Don Lokking at sign, smiling) It's great, Dad.

(As Mrs R goes to take her seat at table, Don quickly ignores the sign. He looks over at his mother quickly to see whether he can whisper to his father un-noticed. He sees his mother looking at Nora, while she tucks her napkin under her chin and reaches her glass to Nora to be f illed.)

Don (Whispers to his father) You got to help me, Dad. I want Bab's mother to be there.

(Mr R winks his eye, pats his son on the shoulder.--Don understands, breathes a sigh of relief as they both turn to walk to table.--Mr R lays sign on end of ~~him~~ serving table.--Nora sits down.--Enter Mary E. with a platter of meat, places it on table, is about to return to kitchen)

Mr R Where you goin' now?

Mary E I just got to get th e potatoes and the vegetables.

Mr R You just gonner sit right down there.--(He points to her chair)--Nora, darlin', get up an' get the whatever Mary Ellen wants ter bring in.

(Mrs R looks daggers at her husband.--Nora rises in a tired manner)

MaryE (As Nora goes to door) The potatoes are on the steam kettle, and peas on back of the stove.

Nora (Sulkily) I've got eyes, have'nt I?

Mr R Yes, and a mouth that's getting a little too big for a little girl.

(Nora throws a somewhat angry look at her Dad and walks out)

Mrs R It's so hot, and sh e's so tired, Michael.

Mr R (Tucking napkin under his chin), So's Mary Ellen, an' she's twice Nora's age.

Mrs R (Looking at her husband,as if he were entirely hopeless You're th e most tactless man I ever---

Mr R Why?--It's true,ain't it?

Mrs R If it were true she killes somebody, would you shout it out like that?

Mr R I would---if I was sure sh e did it.

Mrs R (In tone of disgust) You're hopeless.

(E nter Nora, carrying a fish with potatoes and another with vegetable. She places them on table, while Mary E speaks)

MaryE He's right. Black is black, and white is white.--You can't change that.

Mr R (Smiling) Yes, ye kin. Maybe not the black, but the whit You could dye that, could'nt ye?

MaryE (As she begins dishing out the vegetables) Yes, but it would be dyed. It woyld'nt be real.

Mrs R (Looking at Mary E) A limb off the same tree.

Mr R (Smiling, to wife) I'll bet she don't argue <u>that</u> with you.

(Don, feeling rather restless,nudges his fat.er's foot under the table)

Mr R (Startled, resembers) Oh, yes--yes. Er--er--Margret--

Mrs R Meat's getting cold, Michael. Why don't you begin to serve?

Mr R I will.--I will--er--What was I going to say, Margret?

Mrs R Say it while you're serving, will you? I'm terribly hungry, and--and we won't have much time left to dress.

Mr R (As he takes up serving fork) Gimme the gravy there.

Mrs R I'll serve the gravy. It'll be quicker, an' it'll save the table cloth a little.

Mr R (Smiling) That's right.--(He looks at platter of meat) Say, Mary Ellen, could'nt you mangge to get this meat a --a little--not so dry--er--Maybe you get a little gravy stickin' to it, so I could manage to spill a little of it on the table cloth.

Mrs R You sly old fox. You're gonner serve the meat as long as you live.

Mr R (As he puts a piece of meat on plate and hands it to wife for gravy)--You mean, for as long as <u>you</u> live. (Mrs looks up quickly in a hurt manner)--Now--now--I ~~mk~~ was'nt meanin' anything wrong. I just--Oh, Hell! Let's talk o' something else.--I was getting off subject anyhow.--(He fills another plate, hands it to wife)--You--you know-Margret, all this talk--people thinkin' this or that--what th e devil do we need to care what they think. We kin go on doing what we like just the same. Can't we?

Mrs R (As she passes plate to Mary E) You mean what <u>Don</u> likes don't you?

Mr R (As he serves th e last plate for himself) Well, yes. Why not? He's old enough now to know what he wants.

Mrs R But he is'nt old enough to know wh at's good for him.

Mr R He does too, or he would'nt have picked Barbara for a wife.

Nora Pass the pickels, moth er.

(Mrs R takes pickle dish , passes it to Mary E.-- Mary E., absorbed in the conversation, holds dish before her, lookinh steadily first at her brother, then at hr sister-in-law.--Nora looks at Mary E.)

Mrs R Wife! So it's come to that already!

Don She is going to be my wife. You know that, mother.

Nora Aunt Mary, I wonder if you know you've got the pickle dish in your hand.

MaryE (Startled, looks down at dish) You want it?

(Nora reaches out her han d. Mary E hands her the dish)

Mrs R (To Don)--I know you don't know wh at's good for you. Here you are--you have'nt g ot a nickel you can call your own----

Mr R Who says he has'nt! Ain't this his home as well as ours? I remember the day God sent him to us. We was both prouder than peacocks and happier than the angels in Heaven.--An' n ow you're talkin' like he was a stranger to us.

MaryE You're right, Mike,---

Mr R Sure I'm right .

Mrs R Are you? Well, now I'll show you that you're both wrong. In all Don's life, did h e ever have to ask you for anything?

Mr R No. I always kn ew what h e needed, and I give it to him without him askin'.-(He turns to Don)--Did'nt I son?

Don You did.

Mrs R (To son)--And we did'nt deprive you of anything,even when frigidairs came in, and the iceman went out, did we

Don No.

Mrs R Did you ever stop to think how hard it was for us to keep you going just the same as you did in the glorious days

Don Yes. I did; but Dad, and you too, wanted it that way. Did'nt I want to quit and go in to work hand in hand with Dad?

Nora Are we having our dinner, or is it a debate?

MaryE It ain't spoiling <u>your</u> appetite any, so what are you worrying about?

Nora It's spoiling Pop's and Donald's.

Mr R No, it ain't; an' if it did, it's about the only time we all get together long enough ter talk a little common sense.

Mrs R If it were common sense it would be quite all right; but it is'nt. It's just downright stupid of you to sit there and talk like th at.--Here I am, skimping and crimping to make two ends meet. I've even decided to send the maid away, and <u>we'll</u> have to do all the work ourselves.

MaryE (Sarcastic lly) <u>We</u>?

Mrs R Yes. <u>We</u>.--And let me tell you,Michael, it's gonner be hard---

MaryE (With sarcasm)--Awful h ard, especially on poor Nora.

Nora Please leave me out of it.

Mary E Oh, you'll be out of it all right.

Mrs R Will you stop arguing and let <u>me</u> say something?

MaryE (More sarcasm)For Heaven 's sake, Nora, <u>let</u> your mother say something .

Mrs R Now, whar was I saying? Oh yes. About the maid.--I'm doing all I can to make things a little easier for you. I'm even planning to take the appartment across the hall with one room less. All to help take a little load off your sh oulders.--Now! Maybe what you say is right. This home is his as well as oirs. Then what's the matter with <u>him</u> pitching in and doing something for it?

Mr R What's th e matter with givin' him a chance?

Mrs R What chance? To get married? And to a girl without a rag on her back or a cent to her name?

(Don jumps up, th rows down h is napkin.--Mr R rises quickly, grabs him by th e arm)

Mr R Now, now, son! If you can't smell powder, you must'nt go to war. You knew th ere'd be war about this. Did'nt you?

Don Maybe I did--but--

Mr R With the right king o' amunition you might got some place.--Just turn your back on it, an' you can't win. No siree! You can't!

Mrs R So you're standing him up to fight his own mother?

Mary E No, he ain't, Margaret. He's just seeing things in a sensible ligh t.--If Don was'nt here--well--maybe Michael'd say something that'd wake you up a bit.

Don I can get out.--Let me go, Dad, will you please?--Let me go.

Mr R Ye fool! Ye're half way over th e top! It's only a coward that would'nt go through with it.

Don Don't you worry, Dad. I'm going th rough with it all right. And noth ing will stop me either.

Mary E (To Mrs R) Did ye hear what he said? That's what Michael is seein' ahead of him, and you don't.

Mrs R (In forceful tone) Don! With all th e education we gave you I don't think you could ever figure up how many cakes of ice your father carried on his back to put you through college.--And now, when the time comes for you to help him a little, a girl comes along and falls in love with you.--Sure, any girl with eyes would! Your back is straight. You was rowin' a boat with your college team,while your father was carrying ice.

Mr R Say! Who carried the ice,you or me?

Mrs R You carried th e ice;but I carried loads, that warped me a little bit too. And h e was no small load.

Don Mother, If I was sure, if I could make myself believe, it's only my h elp you're figh ting for,I'd talk things over with Bab. Sh e's not the kind you think! She's the best there is! Sh e'd wait.--But I know, it is'nt that. If I had fallen in love with some society girl, who has plenty of money,I bet it would have been O.K. with you.

Mrs R I don't deny that,--and, maybe if it was just one or the other, money or society, it would'nt be so bad; but when you go and pick a girl that can only be a stone around your neck and ours too, I won't stand for it.

Mr R (In hot temper) Now, Marg ret, you said enough!--(He turns to Don)--Go on in an' get dressed. It's gettin' late.

Don I've got to have that ticket, Dad.

Mr R You'll get it.

(Mrs R jumps up,and in doing so upsets several dishes on the table including water.---Mary E. and Nora both jump up)

MaryE (To Mrs R) What's the matter with ye? Have you gone crazy?

Mr R (Whispers to Don) Go on! Get into yer tuxedo,son.

(Don leaves room with a deep sigh)

Nora I think everybody around here is crazy.

MaryE Except you, eh?

(Mrs R is pan ting from indignation)

Nora I'm sane enough to mind my own business.--(She goes to door.--)

Mr R (Calls to h er) Come back here.

Nora What for?

Mr R (In commanding tone) Never mind what for! Come back!

(Nora walks slowly back into room)

Mr R Go on over an' apologize to your aunt.

Nora Why? What did I----

Mr R In your own little way you told her to mind her own business.--It was her business to put a dry diaper on y yer more than once. Now, what are you lookin' at me like that for? Ain't it the truth?

Nora Lots of things are truths that we don't talk about.

Mr R Is that so? Well, you'll go teachin' yer children,an' I'll t ake care o' mine.---Now you do as you're told.

(Nora looks at her father a moment,sees he means what he says, goes over to her aunt)

Nora (In low tone) I'm sorry.--(She turns and walks out)

Mary E (Looking at her brother angryly) Jackass! You made the child look like two cents.

(Mary E begins to remove th ings from table,going out and coming in while Mr and Mrs R speak.)

MrsR Michael, you're gonner be sorry for this.

Mr R I'm afraid it's you that's g onner be sorry, Margret,---if you don't change your tune.---Did ye ever stop ter think, that if I did'nt do just what Don is wantin' to do now, you would'nt be Mrs Michael Ryan?

MrsR Well, all I can say to that is,th e heat must a gone to yer head.--Did your father put <u>you</u> th rough college? Did he? <u>He did not</u>! He hel you carrying ice with him till the day you got married,when you quit him. And I suppose you were big an' handsome like Don?

Mr R Maybe I was'nt handsome like Don; but I remember when he was little,people said he looked a lot like me.

MrsR Yes. People that borrowed money from you.

Mr R (Goes over to looking glass) Oh, I don't know! I don't think I'm such a bad looking fellow now.--(He walks over to wife, looks at her good-naturedly)--An' wh at's more, you did'nt think so either. Ye know yer don't.---(He puts his arms around her)---Come on, Margret,give us a kiss.---(She looks at him sharply,closing her eyes with a forbidding gesture)---So, <u>that's</u> the way it is? Well, the Lord helps them what help them selves,so here goes!--(He kisses her in spite of her turning from him, then he takes her two hands, holds them in a tight grip.)

MrsR Let go o' my hands!--(Angrily)--Do you hear me? Let go! Or I'll---

Mr R Y You'll wh at!-(He looks at her,laighs) You ain't got a chance with your hands.

MrsR But I have with my feet.

Mr R (Looks down at h er feet) Yes, an' they ain't any too tiny.

Mrs R (As he still holds h er hands)Are ye lettin'go o' my hand

(Mary E is filling tray with dishes from table)

Mr R Not till ye give me a kiss o' yer own free will.

Mrs R Right this minute I'd soon er kiss a pig.

(At this remark Mary E is so shocked she drops tray with all the dishes on it)

MaryE Well, I never!

Mrs R (Going over to see what was broken) Mary Ellen! You've broken my best bowl!

MaryE (Panting with anger) Have I?-I wish it was as easy to bfeak your--(Sh e looks at her brother,then back at Mrs R Well, the good Lord did let me say just about enough for you to understand.--She b ends down to pick up the pieces.--Mr R goes over to help her.

Mrs R You could'nt er done a b etter job if you was paid for it

MaryE (Looking up at Mrs R) Whose fault was it?

Mrs R Mine, I suppose.

Mary E (Very sarcastically) How, would'nt it be just too wicked to blame you for anything! (She rises,carries tray with broken dish es to door,then turns to Mrs R as if about to say ~~anythingsomething~~.-She looks at brother.--He motions to her to keep quiet..--She looks back at Mrs R ag again.-To kepp from speaking sh e sets her lips firmly and shakes her h ead in a manner of"If I could only tell

you wghat I thi nk of you!" As she leaves, she comes near dropping tray ag ain.--Mr R laughs)

Mr R I don't th ink Mary Ellen will ever forgive you for calling her broth er a pig.

Mrs R (Quickly) I did'nt do anything of the sort! I said, I'd sooner kiss a pig.

Mr R Well, that g ives th e pig the right to look down on me.

Mrs R (Stops to think a moment)--I--I--

Mr R It's all right, Marg ret. I know yer bark is much worse than yer bite.

Mrs R (Angrily) I don't bark! I'll have you know I'm not a dog.

Mr R (Smiles)An' I'll h ave ye know I'm not a pig.-Aw, come on!Let's quit this damn fightin'. It don't mean a thing.

Mrs R (Snivelling) All my nice dishes---

Mr R I'll buy ye new ones, any kind ye want.-Now, come on.--(He picks up th e sign agagin)--Take another look at this! It'll take all the sourness out o' ye.--(He holds the sign in front of her eyes.)--Take a look! Ain't it grand?

Mrs R (Looking at sign) Yes, it's gran d, but for how long?

Mr R For how long? Sure, it'll be fer as long as we live.

Mrs R When once h e's married---

Mr R What difference will that make? Married or singlehe'll always be a Ryan,won't he? An' then there'll be a lot o' little Ryans comin' along too.--I'm tellin' ye, Margret, it'll be grander than grand,an' ye know it, but yer just won't give in.--(A slight smile comes into her face)--Glory be ter God! I think yer beginning ter give in.

Mrs R (About to leave th e room) Think again, Michael,because you're all wrong.

Mr R (As he grabs her by the hand) No, I ain't! You could'nt make me believe it,if ye took an oath.--(She stands looki at her husband)--Don't try to put a mask on' I kin see right through it----

MrsR Let me go and get dressed. It's getting late.

Mr R All right. Go ah ead,--(He releases her hand)--but before yer go gimme that ticket fer Don.

Mrs R (In decided tone) I'll give you no ticket for Bab's mother.

Mr R (In serious tone) Ye'll g ive me the ticket fer Don.

Mrs R I'd tear it up, before I'd---

Mr R Margret,I'm givin' ye fair warning! Don't tear up that ticket!

MrsR (Shouts) I won't have that woman there! I won't! I won't!

Mr R An' I say you will!

Mrs R. So! You're defying me for that---

Mr R (Puts up his hand) Don't say th e rest! Not while I've got ears to hear with. I won't stand for it! --(He looks at her defyantly a moment)--Now, give me that ticket!

MrsR You're going to make it, so we'll all be late.

Mr R Maybe we will;but you're g onna gimme that ticket.

MrsR (In tone of intense anger) Now listen here! We're married twenty six years, and in all that time you never spoke to me like you did here to-night. And the cause of it is a girl that used every cunning she kn ew how to get a hold on our boy.--Now, if you think I'm going to stand for this If you think I'm going to let that miserable little beggar corner me, you're all wrong.--I'm ready to fight her to a finish, and we'll see, who'll win.

Mr R (Laying the sign down again on table) Then you'll have to fight me too'

MrsR I'd be dummer than a dunce if I did'nt know that.

Mr R (Defiantly) You are, a lot dummer! If you was'nt you'd know, if you don't give a cat milk he's gonner fibd a way to get it.

MrsR You mean, he'll marry her against my wishes?

Mr R Sure he will, if he's half a man.--(Mrs R is glaring at him)-- Was'nt those just the words you said ter me, when my father butted in?

MaryE Margaret, you only---

MrsR (Ignoring Mary E)-- I can't remember what I said twenty six years ago---

Mary Say, I was talkin' to you---

MrsR I was talking to your brother.

Mary That's the reason I--You know you can't talk yerself into yer clothes,an' it usually takes you a couple o' hours ter get dressed.

MrsR (Angrily) All righ t. All right.

(Mary Ellen goes to table, gathers up the napkins and tidies up table.---Mrs R is about to speak to her husband again)

MrR Now, Margret, yer ain't beginn' again where ye left off.

(Mary Ellen plac es n pkins in drawer)

MrsR I am! I'll have you undebstand once an' fer all times there's a big difference between you and Don. He's educated and good-looking, an ' had a better bring-up than you had.--Now, get that into your thick Irish head an' keep it there!

(At this Mary Ellen swallows hard,h er eyes open wide, she clenches her fingers)

Mary E (Fairly forcing the words,that were stuck in her throat from ager) Don got a better bringing-up, eh? He got a better education! Th at he did! Money got him that, an' yer husband provided the money. An' now I'll have ye understand once an' fer all, money can't do everything. It did'nt make a lady out o' you! If it did, you would not talk like that to a good husband like you got.--Now get that into yer thick English head an' keep it there!

(After looking at her sister-in-law a moment defiantly, she turns taking a deep breath and walks out of room)

Mrs R You heard her say I was'nt a lady---

Mr R You was'nt talking much like one, was ye? I was tryin' every way I knew how holding in me temper, an' letting out hhe best th ere was in me, hoping to keep the peace on a night like this, our son's g raduation. But I could'nt move ye nohow.--Now I'm goin' ter tell you something too.--Don's getting a ticket fer Bab's mother If you don't give him th e extra one you got--he's gettin' mine; and if ye think I'm foolingye, you wait and see.

(Silence a moment. Husband and wife stand looking at eah other.-----Enter Nora)

Nora You can have my ticket, Dad.

Mr R No, darlin'.--I would'nt have ye miss yer brother's--- Was you listening?--(Nora nods her h ead:Yes)

Mary E (Entering, to b rother) If you th ink I'm gonner let you---

Mr R You was listenon' too?

MaryE Sure I was. I knew the bomb was about ready to go off any minuts, so I made sure to-----

(Enter Don,dressed in evening trousers,sh irt and collar. He carries tie in h is hand)

Don It's all righ t, Dad.-I'll find a way to---

Mr R You--you was listenin too?

Don It concerned me, did'nt it?

Mr R Yes, but I'm a little bit surprised at you.

Don I'm susprised at myself, Dad; but under the circumstances-well, you understand.

(Mary Ellen looks at Mrs R. in a way of"Put <u>that</u> in your

MrsR pipe and smoke it"

Mrs R (Bites her lips in anger) Don, you deliberately hurt your mother.--Now you can all figh t it out between yourselves

(She turns to leave room ,as bell rings.--Mary E. g oes to open door.--Don is about to go back to his room.--Mrs R

MaryE listens to hear who the caller might be.)

MaryE (From hall) Miss Illing ton? No,but Don's here. Won't you come in?

Nora (To Don) Sounds like Archie Files.

Don It is.

(Enter Mary Ellen followed by Archie Files, a well groomed young man about twenty three or four years of age.

Don Hello, Arch! Wh at's ---Oh! Meet my mother --and <u>Dad</u>.--Thi is Archie Files.--(He turns to aunt Mary.)--This is my aunt, Miss Ryan,--an d you've met Norine.

Arch Yes, but,strange en ough,we've never been introduced.--(To Nora) Have we?

Nora No. I suppose Don thought we were.

Don (To Archie) I sure did. Tell me, what er--anything happen

Arch No.---No--I--

Mrs R Don, perhaps Mr--er--

Arch Files, or call me Arch . Eveyry one does--at least all my friends,and Don's one of them.

Mrs R (Sweetly) All Don's friends are our friends,ain't they, Michael?--(Sh e n udges her husband's elbow)

Mr R (Awakened from a deep thought) Er--sure--sure.--(Points to a ch air)--Won't you sit down?

Arch No, thanks. I must h urry h ome. Mother's waiting for dinner, and th ere won't be much time left to dress.

MaryE You'll have to excuse me,there's a lot to be done around here--(She casts a sharp look at Nora)--before I can begin to dress.

(Exit Mary E.---Archie looks after her, then looks at Mrs R., as if h oping she too would leave the room.--Silence a moment, then---)

Arch Did --er--did you g et that ticket, Don?

Don (After a moment's silence) Ye s . I--I--got it,but--but like a chump I put it in my back pocket. I suppose in pulling out my h andkerchief I must have pulled the ticket with it.--I sure feel like kicking myself.

Arch Well, don't! I just rang up Bab to tell her I got a ticket for her. George Winters gave me one a little while ago. His Dad took sick and can't go.

Don (Heaves a sinh of relief) That's great! Thanks, Archie ever so much.--What did Bab say?

Arch I could'nt get her on the phone. I tried several times. That's what brough t me up here.--(He ticket from pocket, hands it to Don)--Do you think you can get it to her in time?

Don She's coming up here, sh e and her mother.--We're all going together.

Mrs R (So shocked she's almost lost for words, g asps)--What! You mean to tell me--(She looks at Archie, sees his rather surprised look at her, quickly changes her tone,and mood) Er---(To Archie)--I am a little bit surprised. Mrs Illington h as never--well, this will be her first visit here.--(Sh e turns to Don)--It will be quite an honor. (Archie seems to understand.)

Arch I must be off, Don. See you all again later.

Don Anyone going from your house?

Arch You know there is no one but my moth er, and she---

Don I know she can't go; but I thought maybe---

Arch No, he won't.

Mrs R Do I understand right? No one from your family will be present at your graduation?

Arch I'm not quite as lucky as Don . My mother is an invalid, has been for several years.--My step-father and I--well, we just don't ahree, that's all.

Mr R (Pats Archie on sh oulder) Sorry, my lad. Suppose you go home and dress and come back here. We'll all go togethe

Mrs R (Sweetly) You just took the words right out of my mouth, Michael.--(She turns to Archie)--Do that, Archie. We'll be delighted to have you with us. Won 't we, Norine?

Nora Sure we will.

Arch Thanks a lot!(He turns to g o to door)--I'll be back in time.

(Don turns to see Archie to door)

Mrs R (Quickly) You better finish dressing , Don.Norine will see Archie to the door.

(Don and Nora exchan ge h umiliated g lances)

Arch (As he goes out) I'll try not to keep you waiting.

(Exit Arch ie and Nora. Don closes door after them)

Don You must thing he is a jack ass!

Mrs R On the contrary, I think he is a very nice man.

Mr R So do I.

Don Yes, but mother's thought is just a little bit different than yours.

Mr R Youxh better begin to get dressed, Margret,or we'll all be waiting for you,---(Enter Nora)--as usual.

Nora Come on, mother, if you want me to fix your hair for you

Mrs R (As she takes a few parcels from chair) Take a few of these, Nora.

(Nora quickly picks up several packages.---Mrs R. takes some up in a slow,tired way)

Nora Come on! Come on, a little pep! You've got no time to be tired now.

(Nora leaves with arm-ful of packages.--Don goes to opposite door, which leads to h is room)

Mrs R (As Don puts hand on door knob) Just a minute, Don! You think you put something over on your mother, don't you? (She shakes her head and sets h er lips firmly) Well, you did'nt! When Mrs Illing ton w lks in here, you can just bet your sweet life, she'll never come here again.

Don Mother, if you hurt that woman's feelings---

Mr R Don't worry, son. Sh e won't!

Mrs R (In hard tone) I will!

Mr R I say you won't!

Mrs R And_Iagy I will!

Mr R (Looks at her a moment) If you do---

Don (Reminded of something,smiles)--- It's all right,Dad.--
That very nice youn g man is coming back. Mother would
not want to appear rude before him.--(He looks over to
his mother)--I'm sure she would'nt!
(Mrs R looks up quickly. She realises she is caght in a
net.&&She stands thinking a moment, is about to say some-
thing, thinks better of it, turns abruptly and walks out.
Father and son stand looking at each other smiling)
(Curtain for a few mosents, indicating the passing of
about an hour.
When curtain rises, Nora enters room. Sh e is dressed in
a pretty evening frock. She begins looking around on and
under chairs, on and under table.
Enter Mr R. dressed in evening attire. He is having a
bd tle with his Wing collar.---Nora finds package behind
chair)

Mr R Where is Don! I can't manage th is damn thing.

Nora Come here. I'll fix it for you.
(He goes over to her. She begins pulling the collar to
the collar buttln)

Mr R Hey, there! Stop foolin' with me wind pipe.

Nora Oh, for Heaven?s sake! The collar's yards too big for you
(He is blinking and squiraing)---Will you stop wriggling?
(Nora stands looking at him as if he were a child)---
I better let mother do th is job .

Mr R (As Nora turns to go, g rabbing her arm) You--you might
as well finish th e job, darlin'.

Nora Then you'll stand still?

Mr R I will. Iwill.---(As Nora begins to pull at collar again he squirms and screws up his mouth b ut does'nt move his head.)---Them gymnasiums sure made you strong.--(Collar is fastened)

Nora Now give me your tie.

(He hands her th e tie. She begins tying the bow.)

Mr R Why they could'nt a made a style fer a bow an' no collar I don' know.

Nora (As she puts finishing touch to bow) There's lots you don't know.

Mr R I suppose so,--(As sh e goes to door)-- but there's lots that I forgot a bout that you don't know.--Is your mother ready?

Nora I suppose so. At least, I h ope so.

(Enter Don, fully dressed in his evening clothes)

Nora Where were you?

Don Out in the h all.

Nora Oh, I see! You got 'em bad; b ut don't worry. They'll come.

Don I know it, but let's hope Archie comes before they do.

Nora (As bell rings) Maybe that's them now.

Don God! I hope not.---(He goes to open door)

Mr R If it's them, Nora, make some excuse an' run in an' try to hold yer mother off till th e young man gets here.

(Mr R. takes Nora's hand)

Don (Heard from hall) No. We've plenty of time.

Mr R (Still holding Nora's hand) You'll do that for your old Dad, won't you, darlin?

(Nora looks at h im a moment,nods h er head:yes)

(Enter Mrs Illing ton, Barbara and Don.--Mrs Illington is a lady-like person, dressed neatly but noe lavishly. Barbar a is a rather modern girl,about twent one, the sob who knows when to speak and what to say.--She's dressed in a pretty organdie frock.-----

Mr R (Goes over to g reet Bab) ZHe takes her hand)---I am right glad to see you,and---(He looks at Mrs Illington, drops Bab's hand gently)--your mother.--(He puts out hand to Mrs I.---Th ey sh ake h ands)

Nora (Goes over to Bab) Glad you came, Bab. Awfully glad.

Bab Meet my mother, Norine.

Nora (Goes over and shakes hands with Mrs I.) I am right glad to meet you, Mrs Illing ton.

Mrs I I am very glad to have the pleasure of meeting you.

(Mr R. is motioning to Nora to go in to her mother. Don is speaking quietly to Bbb, th en in louder tone)

Don Mother will be in in a few moments.--She is'nt quite--

Mr R (Nervously) Nora, darlin', go in an' help mother. Get her dress hooked up. You know she can't do that herself

Nora (Sweetly) I was just going in to her, when the bell rang.--(To Mrs I)--I knew it was you folks, so I--- You'll excuse me for a few moments, won't you?

Mrs I Surely, surely. Bab always hooks my dress for me.

(Exit Nora.-----Father and son exchange relieved glances, then Don turns, places ch airs for Mrs I. and Bab. They sit down.---Mr R. pulls at his collar)

Don What's the matter, Dad? Collar tight?

Mr R I don' know, son. Nora says it's yards too big for me.

Bab Dad was always so uncomfortable in a wing collar. Was'nt he, moth er?

Mrs I Yes. He was. Whenever we had to g o anywhere of importance, his first question would be:do I have to wear a wing collar?

Mrs R (Is heard from other room) Don't you tell me what to do

(Mr R. and Don quickly exchange glances)

Mr R (Nervously) My--my wife--I--I mean Nora--Nora wants her mother to--to wear a --light dress, an' she--she always likes dark clothes.

Mrs I I don't blame her. I am very partial to dark clothes myself.

Mrs R (Is heard again) Now, don't you worry about my good judgement.

Mr R (Trying to smile) They're still at it. They both want their own way.

(He goes to door, closes it t ightly; but it is no soonr donethan door opens abruptly.--Mrs R. stands in doorway attired in a light-peach colored chiffon gown.--She looks at her sh arply)

Mrs R What was the idea of---

(Bell rings)

Don That's Archie!

Mr R (Looks sweetly at his wife, as Don rushes out to open door) Yes, Darlin', that's Archie.

(Mrs R. comes into room, her manner quite changed.--Don and Arch ie enter,th e latter in evening clothes.

Arch Sorry, if I kept you waiting.

Mr R (In relieved tone) It' all righ t, ay boy. You came

just in time.

Mrs R (Looking at husband) Yes, just.

Don (Goes over to mother, takes her hand, leads her over to Mrs Illington) Meet Mrs Illington, mother.

(Mrs I. rises.---They shake hands.--Archie is standing close to Mrs I.---Mrs R looks at him a mment, th en at Mrs I.)

Mrs R (Sweetly) I am very g lad to meet you, Mrs Illington

Mrs I I've been wan ting to meet you for a long time.

(Enter Mary Ellen, dressed plainly b ut nicely)

Mary E Say! Do you folks know what time it is? (She sees Bab) Hello, Bab!---(She looks at Bab's mother)--Your mother! You would'nt have to tell me---you're the dead spit of her.

Mrs R (Trying to keep Mary E. from saying any more) Mary, will you please call Norine?

(Mr R is speaking softly to Bab)

Mary E Sure--sure,--just a minute.---(She g oes over to Mrs I. I'm Don's aunt.

(Mrs R.,seeing that Mary E. continues to talk,g oes a over to Archie,begin s to talk softly to him,in hopes he would'nt hear Mary EllenVs conversation)

Mrs I Don often speaks of you.--I think there is a soft spot in his heart for you.

Don (Going to door leading to his room) I'll g et my hat.

Mr R (Turns to Don)--Get mine too.

Don (As he leaves) I will.

Mary E. (To Mrs I.) Excuse me a minute. I'll call Nora.---

Mary E (Goes to door, calls loudly) Nora!--Nora!

Nora (From her room) Yes?

Mary E Your mother wants you.

Mrs R (Trying hard to appear calm, forcing a smile) I could have called that my myself, Mary.--(She walks over to Mary E.,whispers) Stop calling her Nora, will you?

Mary E (Mary stops to think a moment, looks over at Archie, makes a sudden knowing gesture) Ha, hia. Enter Nora)

Mary E (Looking straight at her) Norine--(With the accent on the last syllable)--What kept you in there so long when you know--(She glances over at Archie)

Mrs R (Fearing what she may say, quickly iterrupts)-- You were worrying we would be late,and now---Where's Don?

Mr R He's gettin' our hats.

Mrs R (Goes to Don's door, calls)--Don--Don, what's keeping you?

(Enter Don, hands father his hat, holds his own in hand

Mrs R You always manage to be late,Don.--I'll wager you'll be late to your wedding.

Don (Looks at Bab happily) No, mother. I'll be right on time for that. I might even try to make it a little bit ahead of time.

Mrs R (A little sarcasm in her tone)--Yes, you might try.

(Mrs I.,looking Mrs R.,understands)

Mr R (Anxious to heal up the conversation) Come on! We better be going.

Archie Yes. I think we better.---(He goes over to Nora) Ready?

Nora Yes.Let's g o!

(As they walk to door, Mrs R looks at them,her face beaming with joy.--Don goes over to Bab, pffers her his arm, then offers other arm to Mrs I.---Mrs R.,seeing this,g asps, as she looks at her husband.--Mary E. smiles with contentment,while sh e watches Don and the ladies go to door; b ut wh en sh e turns and sees her sister-in-law's expression, sh e tries to alter hers)

Mr R Mr R,,not knowing what to say or h ow to act in order to keep the peace,just stands looking at his wife)

Mrs R (Trembling with anger) He'll--he'llpay for this---

Arch (Entering) Norine forgot her vanity case.

Mry E I'll get it for you.

Mrs R (Trying to speak as calmly as possible) Come, Michael, we better go.

Mr R Just a minute now. We'll wait for Mary Ellen.

(Enter Mary E.,hands Archie the vanity case.--Archie goes to door, opens it,stands waiting for thea to go first.-----Mr R offers wife his arm, the other arm to sister.---They walk out.--Arch ie follows them)

Curtain.

Act II.

Time: Six months later.

Scene: Same as Act I.

As curtain rises Mary Ellen is discovered sitting on floor. ---Nora is standing close to her,having the botton of her dress pinned evenly.

Mary E Turn around.--(Nora turns a little)--A little more.--(Nora turns a little more)--Go on, turn.--(Nora turns a little more)--Saym ain't there any stuff in the store b ut organ dy?

Nora Yes, but I <u>like</u> organdy.

Mary E Do ye? Well, I'm gonner let you sew this hem an' most of it is cut on the bias,--we'll see how you like it.

Nora Ah, aunt Mary, have a heart!

Mary E I <u>have</u>, that's wh y you're gonner learn to do things for yourself.--Archie's got to be considered a little bit too.

Nora Archie's g ot plenty o' money.--I won't have to do things.

Mary E (Rising)--Don't be so sure. Your father had plenty of money a few years ag o.---(She goes to door,calls)-Margaret!--(Little louder)--Margaret!

Mrs R (From kitchen)--Yes? What do you want?

Mary E Come in here a minute.

Nora (Looking down at dress)--I think this could be a little longer.

Mary E Longer? If it was any longer than that,you'd break your neck over it.

(Enter Mrs R.,her hair untidy. She wears a kitchen

apron. As she enters room, she's wiping face with apron

Mrs R Sewing 's a lot easier than baking by a five hundred heat oven.

(Nora is trying to see th rough a small mirror how long her dress is)

Mary E Well, why don't you sew?

Mrs R I wish I could.

Mary E Then what th e deuce are you talking about?--You ought to be glad you got some one to sew for ye.

Mrs R I could be--if I did'nt have to pot-wrastle while---

Mary E Oh, I see! You'd like to do,both, while you sit an' play the piano with one finger.---(Nora is about to leave)--Hey there! Where you goin'?

Nora I'm g oing to take a look in the long mirror.

Mary E Never mind <u>your</u> looking,let yer mother look.

Nora (Coming back) Don't you think it could be a little longer?

Mrs R It <u>could</u> be, but it <u>won't</u>! You'd step in it an' tear it all to pieces the first time you wear it.--You know,moeys too scarse around here now to take any chances even with a dollar.

(Nora begins to unfasten the dress)

Mary E Wait a minute now! (She looks at hem critically) I think that side looks a little bit crooked. Don't you, Margaret?

Nora Don't worry about that, aunt Mary. Nobody's wearring dresses even at the b ottom any more.

Mary E (As she picks up some pins from floor) Well, then I'm nobody. My dresses are even at the bottom, an' this gonna stay even.--There'll be nothing crooked about Mary Ellen Ryan, not on your life--at no time.

Nora (Trying to unpin the dress) Help me out of this, aunt Mary, will you?

Mary E (While she's fixing pins so she can remove the dress) If you want to wear th e dress to-morrow night you bette start right in workin' on that hem--(She fixes the last pin)--There now! Step out of itF

Nora (Stepping out of dress, picks it up) Gee, aunt Mary! I wish you'd sew it for me. You know I'll make a bum job of it.

Mary E You'll sew that hem, an' you'll sew it right; because if you don't I'm gonna rip it out, an' you'll do it over again.

Mrs R (To Mary E) You know she can't do those small invisible stitches righ t.

Mary E Can't she? Well, she'll learn.--If Archie ever runs into hard luck like your husband did, there'll be no aunt Mary Ellens around to sew for her and her kids.--And another thing! Archie is'nt getting married in a hurry. I've seen paralytics like his mother live longer than you think.--(She turns to Nora)--You'll find the spool of silk on the machine,--(As Nora walks to door in sulky mood)--an' th e needles are in the cushion on my dresser

Nora (As she opens door) You're getting awfully mean lately.

Mary E Not half men enough to make you what you ought to be.

(Nora, going out, th rows an angry glance at her aunt)

Mrs R (Heaves a deep sigh) It's hard on the poor kid,after having all the dresses sh e wanted,--an d now---

MaryE That's just too bad! She ough t to be glad she's got a roof over her head,an' so ough t you .--How about a lot o' people that's sleeping on park benches. People that is just as good as you an' yours--an' a lot better!(She looks around th e room)--Where'd I put my scissors?

Mrs R It's in the kitchen.

MaryE In the kitchen? How'd it get in there?

Mrs R That corrugated box did'nt fit under the gas stove,so I cut it down.

MaryE (Fairly shrieks)--Wh at! You cut a corrugated box with my good scissors?

Mrs R (A puzzled look)--Yes. Wh at of it?

MaryE What of it? Well, I'll tell you. It's just this, you can keep that scissors now. It'll cut your butter when you heat it a little,an' you'll march yourself out an' buy me another one.

Mrs R I did'nt know---(Hall door is heard closing)--Can that be Don already?

MaryE (Looking into hall)--It's Michael.

Mrs R He said he was'nt coming home for supper.--(As Mr R. enters)---What's h appened?

Mr R (Casually) Nothin'--much.

Mary E What are we supposed to take out o' that?

Mr R (As he walks slowly across room and sits down in arm chair)--Noth ing--much.

Mary E (Goes over to him, smells his b reath) You been drinkin'!

Mr R (Looks up at sister a moment)--Yes, I have! But not enough.--(He takes some open letters from coat pocket)-- I kin still see th e amounts on these bills,an' I think I kin figure 'em up too.--

MaryE Now, Michael, before you go any furth er--Margarte's been tryin' awful hard to keep expenses down, an' it's been no fun after having eveything she wanted for so many years, an' then have to skimp an' crimp on everything.

(He opens a bill, hands it to Mary E.--She looks at it.)

MaryE (Reads) Four bouquets,twelve dollars each, forty eight dollars!--(She looks at Mrs R.)--What's this?

Mrs R (Hesitates a little)--I been sending a bouquet of flowers to Archie's mother.

Mr R A bouquet?

Mrs R One each week for the last four weeks.

MaryE (Fairly shrieks) At twelve dollars a bouquet?

Mrs R I could'nt very well send cheap flowers to her.

Mr R What was the idea o' sending any? An' if you felt you had to, one would er been enugh , would'nt it?

Mrs R (Shaking her head in sheer desperation) If you only had a little business sense, Mich ael!--That money will come back to you with compound interest.

Mr R So that's what you're doin?

Mrs R Yes. Why not? We've only got two children. One is marrying a beggar---The other one won't. I'll see to that.

Mr R The first thing you better see to is to cut down our expenses.--If Archie does'nt care enough about our girl ter marry her---Sendin' twelve dollars bouquets to his mother won't help any.

Mary E No. It won't, Margaret.

Mrs R You're forgetting Archie has'nt got anything. It's all his mother's. So it's up to us to keep on the right side of her.

MaryE Right side, left side or in side. If he cares enough about Nora to marry her, he'll marry, an' if he don't, a whole hot-house full o' flowers won't do the trick. So save ye're money for the funeral; then you can send her a nice big blanket o' roses.--(She goes to door)--Did you put that roast in the oven?

Mrs R Yes. I turned it just before I---I'll be in in a few minutes.

MaryE You don't have to. I'll finish the cooking. You look like you're dyin' on yer feet. Go on, wash up an' make up. Archie might come floating in. (Exit Mary E.)

Mrs R Now listen here, Michael. I understand the world of to-day. You and Mary Ellen don't. You got to let me do things my way.

Mr R Not when it comes to spendin' money we can't afford.

Mrs R You can afford everything for Donald, can't ye?

Mr R That won't be for long. As soon as a little success comes his way, he'll be off our hands.

Mrs R As soon as Nora's married she'll be off our hands.

Mr R I'm hoping Don'll be on his own long before Archie'll be able to git married.--An', by the way, let me ask you something. Has the boy asked Nora ter marry him?

Mrs R No; but what do you think he's coming up here for two an' three times a week--to keep you an' me or Mary Ellen company?

Mr R Well, I don' know. When a man wants to marry a girl,he usually asks her. He's been comin' here now six months, an' I noticed you clean ed th e coast for him,many an' many a time. An' what's he said?--Nothin' about marriage If he did,I'd have heard ab out it. She'd acome runnin' to Mary Ellen,an' she'd acome runnin' terome.

Mrs R How can a boy ask a g irl to marry h im when he's tied down to a sick, dying mother?

Mr R Don't kid yerself, Margret! She might be sick, but she ai'nt dyin', maybe not for a long time yet.

(Enter Nora, dress on arm,th imble on finger)

Nora Hello, Dad! (She kisses father, then turns to mother) You better go anf chang e your dress. I've got a hunch Archie will be running in here on his way home.

Mrs R I was just going in to dress,wh en your father took it into his head to get something off his chest. Now he won't have to follow me in to my room to give me the rest of it. You stay here and get some of it.-(Exit MrsR

Mr R (Patting Nora gently on the sh oulder) It's all right, Nora. Don't be afraid.--(He looks at dress on her arm and thimble on her finger)--That's a pretty color,that dress is.--Ye're makin' it yerself, ain't yer, darlin'?

Nora Some of it.

Mr R (Pats her again gently on sh oulder)--You're a fine girl helpin' yer Daddy along.An' I'll bet you'll like ter sew now, once you git started. Won't ye, darlin'?

Nora (Screwing up her nose) Sure. I'll just love it.

Mr R (Looking for something to say,that will start off the conversation he h as in mind)--(He touches the dress

with his two fingers, cocks his head to one side)--
You--you know, this looks so pretty, I--I--bet ye're
gonner look swell in it.

Nora I hope so.

Mr R I suppose ye're--ye're gonner wear it goin' out with
Archie?

Nora Yes,sure.We're going to a dance to-morrow night.

Mr R (Smiling gently) Are ye? Well, I'm glad o' that.

Nora You talk as if it were the first time I'm going out
with him.

Mr R No, deary, no.--It's not th e first,an' I'm hopin' it
won't be the last,--but---

Nora But what? Wh at's on your mind, Dad?

Mr R (Scratching his h ead) Well,I'll tell ye.--(He stands
looking at her a moment,then walks to arm chair, sits
down)--Come on over here an' sit down.--(He points to
his lap for Nora to sit down.--She does so.)--That's
the girl! Now me an' you is gonner have a nice little
talk, not about money. No, nothin' like that.--We're
just gonner talk kx about th e future, your's--I mean.

Nora (Looks at her Dad, beginning to understand)--Yes----

Mr R I--I--(He hesitates)--This really ain't a man's job,
but--but--well, you know, darlin',your mother's awful
good an' she loves ye,more thmn I would know how ter
tell ye;but sh e thinks the more money ye have the
happier ye kin be. An' me an' you,we don't think that
way,do we, darlin'?

Nora You mean Archie.

Mr R Yes. I mean Archie.--Would ye--would ye marry him if ye wasVnt expectin' his mother ter die an' leave him a lot o' mon ey? Would yer?

Nora I--I honestly don't know. You--you see, when he first came here I--I sort of felt like th e door opened and a bag of money flew in. And you know, Daddy, the shortage of money has been th e topic of th e day in this house for a long time now. It--it sort of got under my skin; and I tell you th e truth . I began to see mother's right. With money you can do most anything.Without it, well, you can't do very much.

Mr R You can keep yer self-respect without money,an' you can go to bed with a clear conscience.

Nora Yes,--but you get up with a pretty rotten feeling. There's work to be done,th at you don't like to do, and there's things you want to have, that you can't buy

Mr R (Puts hand under her chin,turns her face to his)--Nora, darlin',I'd give a lot if I could take that wrong feelin out o' yer heart and put the right sense into yer head. You know, deary,hm when you marry a man,it ain't fer a day or a year. It's forever.--Ye sit at the same table with 'im every day o' yer life,an' there's three hundred an sixty five days in th e year,--an the same number o' nights ter sleep with 'im.--It would be worth all-the money he's got an' more fer the punishment ye're takin' if you did'nt love him.--Did ye stop ter think o' that?

Nora (Hesitates) I have--and I h ave't. I started to think seriously about it once or twice, and then I--(She looks

at her Dad, is habout to say something,checks herself) Dad! You're not so young any more. You can't keep on working and worrying like this much longer.

Mr R Indade? So yer th ink yer Dad's ready ter be put on the shelf! Not on yer life! Sure, I'm feelin' younger now, than I did five years ago. An' wh y would'nt I? Don's a lawyer, sittin' in his office---

Nora Waiting for somebody to come in and hand him five dollars.

Mr R Sure. That's what they all have to do,till they hit a couple o' big cases, an' get their names in the papers. That won't take very long. Don's a smart lad. You know that.

Nora He's not half as smart as some of th e lawyers I know, that are starting righ t now. If your hopes are on Don, you'll have a long time to wait.

Mr R (Surprised)--Are ye th inkin' I'm waitin' fer Don to do something fer us?

Nora Then why---

Mr R Your mother's afraid, the same as you, that I'm gettin' too old an' ready fer a wheel chair; bu take it from me darlin',there's many a year hahead o' me that I'll work

Nora And worry.

Mr R Only animals don't worry, an',maybe if they could tell us, we'd find out,th ey worry a little bit too.--Now, deary, come on, tell yer Daddy the truth.--Are ye eggin' Archie on ter marry you just so as to make it easier fer yer moth er an' me,--or---

Nora It's not altogether for you and mother---

Mr R An' it's not altog ether for you.--You--you--never knew yer Dad to tell ye a down right lie--unless maybe in a joke--an' this ain't no joke--I'm meanin' every word of it! --I'd sooner sweep th e streets fer th e rest o' me life than have my little girl marry a man just for his money.--Now look me straight in the eye an' tell me the truth, just how ye're feeling about it. Will ye, deary?

Nora (Hesitates a moment) How--h owcan I tell you,Daddy, when--whenI really don't know.

Mr R (Looking directly into her eyes)--But you do know you like Jerry Kearny.

Nora (Lowering her eyes)--Jerry's down an d out.

Mr R He don't have ter stay down an' out.--He's young, an' so are you. And--an', let me whisper a little secret in yer ear.--(He draws her head close to himself)--I've got a little saving account in th e bank. Started it fer yer dowery th e very year you was born, an' I've been putting in th e same amount every month from that day to this.--Ye're got a nice little pile o' money all yer own. (Nora looks at him a momen t, throws her arms around his neck and sobs.)

Mr R Now, now, deary. Ye got n othin' ter cry about. Everything is shiny an' rosy for ye.--Ye're young, ye got a good home fer as long as ye want it, an' yer Dad's telling ye now from the bottom of his heart--yer don't have ter do nothin' yer don't want ter do.--(He is patting her gently on the back)--Nothin', deary, nothin'.

(Nora is sobbin g softly, as Mary Ellen ehers.)

MaryE Oh, here ye are!--(Nora looks up.--Mary E. sees she's

been crying)--What the divil's the matter with you, Michael? This mornin' ye let Don have it good and plenty He went out without a bite o' breakfast, an' now ye're at her.

Mr R I was'nt scoldin' her.

Mary E Yer m.s.or shw would'nt be crying.--Look at her! Her eyes all red! I'd like ter hit ye over th e head with this scissors.--(She hols up scissors)

Mr R (Smiling) You'd like ter.

Mary E Don't you sit th ere an' laugh into my face.--For two pins I'd do it.

Nora (Puts arms around her Dad's neck again) He was'nt scolding, aunt Mary.

Mary E Then what yer crying for?

Nora He's the best Dad a girl could ever have.--(She kisses her Dad)

Mary E An' that's why ye're crying?

Nora (Nods her head)--Yes.

Mary E (Not unds rstan ding)--Are you crazy?

Nora (Rises) No. I'm quite all right.--(She looks down on the hem of th e dress on her arm, th en slyly looks up at her aunt and smiles)--I'm just lucky, that's all.

Mary E Lucky! In what?

Nora In being blessed with an aunt like you.

Mry E (Looks bewildered first at Nora then at her brother)--Now I know ye're crazy.

Mr R (Laughs)--Mary Ellen, ye ough t ter know by the look in her eyes it's something she wants yer to do.

Mary E (Looking at Nora)--Is that so! Well, whatever it is it's something I ain't gonner do.--(She looks down at her own dress)--How far did you get with that hem?

Nora (Looks at her aunt, smiles)--Not very.

(Mary E. picks up lower part of skirt,begins to look for part sewed. She finds it,holds it up between the two fingers of each hand.)

Mary E (In tone of disgust)--So,this is what's sewed! All of five inches, an' that looks like it was done with a carpet needle.--Well, if you think you're gonner wiggle-waggle me into sewing this hem,you're just wasting yer time thinkin'.

Nora (Looking at her aunt out of the corner of one eye)--An' me just telling you how lucky I am to have an aunt like you.

Mary E Nix on the blarney! It ain't working, not this time. There's an Irish scotch on the radio to-night,an' I'm listening in.

Nora But you could sew and listen at th e same time.

Mary E Oh! Could I? Well, you can sew it an' weep at the same time; but sew it you <u>will</u>.

Nora (Turns to Dad)--She's getting awfully hard lately.

Mr R I guess she's been soft too long.

Mary E That's the one right guess you made in a long time.--I'm th rough sewing for any o' ye.--Maybe I'm getting old an' cranky,but--well, I'm th rough sewing,that's all.

(Door is heard closing .--Mary E. is about to go to door She comes face to face with Don.)

Mary E Hello, Don! How'd you like the breakfast ye did'nt eat? (Nora takes scissors from Mary's hand and leaves)

Don I had an early lunch , so it's all right.

Mary E Your father's got about as much brains---(She casts an angry look atbher brother,turns about to leave, sees Don's coat pocket is ripped)--How'd you do that?

Don Caught it on a hook in the office.--Wi ll you sew it up for me, aunt Mary?

Mr R What's the matter with taking it over ter the tailor?

Mary E Say, lay off this boy, will you! You started ter pick on hi, early this mornin' an' ye're ain't through yet.- Take off yer coat, Don. I'll fix it fer you.--(As Don removes coat and hands it to her)--Are ye in a hurry for it?

Don No, aunt Mary. Any time will do.

Mary E (As she goes out)--I'll do it after supper.--(She looks at her b rother.--He is laughing ag ain)--You better quit yer laughin' before yer wife sees you.--You know she ain't in a lughing mood just now.--(Exit Mary)

Mr R Well, son, anyth ing n ew?

Don Heilbrun and Meadows sent us a ch eck this morning.

Mr R (Delighted)--Fine! You'll be coming along all right now. It won't be long.

Don Yes,thanks to Archie. So far n early every client that sent a check is one of Archie's friends.

Mr R You know, Don, when yer mother suggested Archie fer a partner,me an' you did'nt seem ter think so much of the idea,did we?

Don No. I guess we both fig ured the same thing. He's not

much of a go-getter,and when business interferes with pleasure, he usually gives up the business.--But, Dad, take it from me,mon ey makes the mare go every time.--People with money have friends; and the more money they have the more th eir friends do for them.

Mr R I guess ye're right there.--We gotter give yer mother credit. She would'nt let g o,an' she stuck to it till she put it over.

Don Let me tell you something,Dad. Mother's right in a lot of things. For instance: if you h ad quit the ice-business when she told you to and gone into the ice-cream business,you'd have been all right to-day; but, by the time you made up your mind--you had no money to do it with.--And she's not so far from wrong with me either, I mean ab out my getting married and leaving you to paddle your own canoe. It is'nt fair, and I know it.

Mr R (In shocked tone)--I can 't believe it!

Don You can't believe what?

Mr R I thought you was h ead over h eels in love with Bab.

Don I am; but it's just th at I'm between the devil and the deep sea.

Mr R (Relieved)--Oh ! So that's it! Ypu'd like ter git marrie ,but it's me that's keeping you back.

Don Now don't get me wrong, Dad. I am not holding anything ag ainst you. On th e contrary,I feel like a cad. I know the weight of a cake of ice,and I know how many of them you carried on your back for me. And I'd surely be blind,if I could'nt see,you're--not as strong as you used to be.

Mr R Well, if you think I'm knuckling down ter old age, you' are as blind as a bat.--No, sirree! I'm still fat as a fiddle, an' I'm stayin' that way for a long time yet.

Don I hope it is so.

Mr R You hope it is so? I know it is so.--(He motions to Don to come close to him)--I got a little secret to tell you.--(He speaks in low tone)--You--you know your mother thinks I'm dead broke---Now, you won't say anything about what I'm goin' ter tell you?

Don Not if you don't want me to.

Mr R Well, I don't want yer to. Not even to yer own mother.

Don All right, then I won't.

Mr R (Hesitates)--You see, Don, when you was a little boy I begun to make plenty o' money; but I always figured somethin' migh t happen. I might gamble an' lose like it turned out I did. I figured if I could put aside a certain amoun t o' mon ey every month for you, I'd never touch it for anything or any one but you.--Now it's all th ere, my boy. I never cheated on yer--never. I did'nt miss a month from the day I bagan ter this very day.--Now you see, sonny, you'll be doin' me a favor. When I hand that money over to you, I won't have ter worry about savin' for yer any more. That'll be a big load off my mind. Yes sirree! It'll make things a lot easier for me.---(Don stands looking at his father with a smile)--Ye're lookin' at me like yer don't believe me---

Don (Still smiling)--I don't.

Mr R Thenye're calling yer father a liar?

Don No. I--I--I just--Now, Dad, you don't really expect me to believe that Fairy tale? And if you really had all that money, do you think I'd take it? I feel small enough, not being able to help you. How do you think I would feel,if --Great Scott!--don't you give me credit for a little pride?

Mr R Pride between father and son? Rats!--Suppose you had some money,an' I needed it, would'nt you hand it over?

Don You know I would.

Mr R Well, that works both ways. I got a little money, an' you need it.

Don Who's been telling you I need mon ey so badly?

Mr R You're telling it to me--righ t now I see it in your eyes It's written all over your face,my boy.

Don (Smiles)--One of your old tricks to make me talk.

Mr R No, not this time--yer don't have ter--Ye see I've been through what you're goin' th roug h n ow,so I know.--The only difference is, I was'nt a coward.

Don You mean--

Mr R I mean I got married wh en I wahed to.

(Don's eyes open wide. He is about to speak as Mary Ellen enters, Don's coat on her arm)

MaryE You'll have to give this coat to the tailor,Don. It's a cross tear. I tried to sew it,but it looks bad.

Don I'll take it to a place where they'll weave it in. No one will ever notice it.

MaryE Can they do that?

Don Sure. It costs a little more to have it done,but it will pay. It's practically a new suit

(Mr R is walking up and down th e room in deep thought

Mary E Too bad we can't push these walls out a little bit, Michael. It would save ye the trouble o' coming an' going.

Mr R I was just thinkin'----

Mary E So I see.--(A pause)--Well, them 's a lot o' times I'd sooner see you think than hear ye talk,--and-(She looks at Don) I'm thinkin' this is one o' the times.

Don This is one of th e times when you're wrong, aunt Mary Dad was giving me some--some good advice.

Mary E You know your Dad is nothin' fer himself, all for you kids; but I ain't so sure about his advice being good. But if you th ink it is,you've been wearing long pants now fer a lon g time--you ough t ter know him----(Bell rings)--I'll bet that's Archie!

Nora (Heard from h all)--Hello, Archie! What you got there?

Archie (Coming through hall)--Come on in. I'll show you.--(He is juggling a package)--For Heaven's sake, aunt Mary, take this before I drop it. It's red hot!--(He fairly throws package in to Mary E's hands)

Mary E I don't think it is so hot.

Arch You would,if you carried it as long as I did.

Mary E What is it, any way?--Smells good!

Arch It's someth ing I know Mrs Ryan likes. Open it and look at it.

(Mary E opens package,looks at it, turns up her nose)

Arch What's the matter?

Mary E Well, the truth of it is--I think I stepped inter some thing that looked like th is once, but I never tasted it.

(They all laugh.-----Enter Mrs R.)

Mrs R Hello, Archie!

(Mary E moves the paper container almost into Mrs R's face)

MaryE A present for you, Margaret.

Mrs R For me?

Arch I know you like San Sun's chop suey.

Mrs R (Sweetly)--I'm crazy about it.

MaryE (Looks at contain er)--Anybody that could like this, is crazy.

Nora I like it.

MaryE Who said you was'nt crazy?

Don I like it too.

Mr R So do I.

MaryE That settels the argument. You're all crazy.

Mr R (Laughs)--Ye know, Mary, the first thing a crazy person will do tell you is, that he is'nt crazy.

MaryE (Sarcastically)--Is it a fact! I never knew that.--How'd you find that out? (She walks over to Archie) You're stayin' for supper--I mean--dinner.

Arch Thanks, aunt Mary; but I really can't--not to-night. My mother had a pretty bad day.

Mrs R That's too bad.

Mary E (Looks at Mrs R out of the corner of her eye)--Ain't it though!--(She continues looking at Mrs R in a sarcastic way. She is going towards door, bumps into a chair, drops the chop suey. --In her effort to keep her balance, she steps into the mess.--Looks up at Mrs R a moment)

Mary E Well, it only goes to show you what I said is the truth.

I stepped in it all right.

Mrs R (Annoyed)--You could'nt possibly ever tell a lie?

Mary E No, I could'nt!--(She looks down at mess agagin)--I did it with my little hatchet!--(She turns and walks out)

Arch She sure is a cure for the blues.

Don She's the sun that shines into this home.

(Enter Mary E. with pail and a rag, is about to get down on her knees)--

Arch (Looking directly at Mary E.--) I like aunt Mary a lot! (As Mary E looks at him)--And I'll bet you all do, even Mrs Ryan.

Mrs R Even? I hope you don't th ink th ese little tiffs mean anything?

MaryE (Sarcastic)--No--no--they don't mean a thing--not a thing.--Just little love tiffs,--and tiffs--an' more tiffs.--(Mary E. g ets down on h er knees, begins

Mr R cleaning up)--That's all.

Mr R That's all!---(He smiles)---

Mary E (Looking up at her brother)--That's all!

(Bell rings)

Don That's Bab!--(He is about to walk to door)

Mrs R Bab! Are you expecting her?

Don (As he goes out)--Yes.

Arch (To Mrs R)--I'll bet you're glad now I did'nt take you up on that offer to stay for dinner.

Mrs R Why?

Arch You'll have a guest now.

Mrs R Bab rarely stays to dinner.--Her moth er does'nt like to eat alone.

(Enter Bab and Don)

Arch (Going to door, faces Bab)--Hello, Bab! Wish I could stay a while! Don't run away. I'll try and come back after dinner.

Bab How's your mother?

Arch Not so good.

Bab Well, as long as it's not very bad---

ArchShe's been pretty bad th ese last few days.

(Mary E rises from floor.--A h opeful look is plainly seen in Mrs R's eyes.---Mary E sees it, picks up pail, looks at Mrs R suspiciously as she goes out)

Bab I'm so sorry; but don't you worry, Archie. Where there's a spark of life th ere's hope.--You remember when my mother was so ill---

Arch Yes; but--(A sigh)--my mother,--well, there's no sense crying before we're hurt.--(He opens door)--Stay a while I'll try to get back.

Bab All right, Arch.--Hope you'll find your mother a lot better.

Arch (Blowing a kiss to Nora)--Thanks,Bab.--(He leaves)

Nora (Stands still a moment, looks at mother, then calls after Arch)--Wait a minute, Arch ie!--(She goes out)

Mr R (Goes over to Bab) Well, how is Bab?

Bab I'm fine, thank you. How are you?

Mr R Could'nt be finer!

Bab That's great!--(She turns to Mrs R)--I hope you're the same.

Mrs R (Sighs)--I wish I was.--Trouble affects me altogether differently than it does my husband.

Bab That's too bad. One really g rowws old b efore one's time,when one worries over trifles.

Mrs R Trifles? Unless Don 's keeping you in the dark,you ought to know better th an to say my troubles are trifles.

Bab Troubles are---how you take them.

Mr R That's just what I say.

Mrs R Sure. You look like it,and so do we.--What have you got to show for all your ligh t-heartedness?

Mr R A lot. I've got you, an' we've got our children--and--we're all well.

Mrs R Don't we have to eat?

Mary E (Entering) You'remy stayin' fer dinner,Bab. We've got a nice roast chicken.

Mr R There you are! That don't sound like we got nothing to eat.

MaryE Who says we got nothin' to eat?--(She turns to Mrs R)--You, I suppose!

Mrs R It is'nt just now I'm thinikng of. It's the near future

MaryE That ough t to tickle you ter death . You'll have something to cry about.--(Sh e looks over at Bab)--Don't look so glum,Bab.Th ey ain't starvin' now,and they ain't ever gonner starve--not while my brother's livin', and n ot even after he's dead.--You can take frou me, there is nothin' much to worry about.--(She turns to brother)-Is there, Michael?

Mr R An' if there was?--I never knowed worry to do much good

Mrs R You're both talking ,as if th e only one concerned in our family troubles is Bab.

Don She's not the only one,but she's one of us.

Mrs R Not yet, my boy.

Don (Placing arm around Bab's waist) She is,mother.--(He looks directly into his moth er's eyes)

Mrs R (In frightened tone)--Wh at do you mean by that?

Don I mean, Bab and I are married.

(Mrs R. is too stunned to speak for a moment.--Mr R, looks shocked for a moment, then h e begins to smile)

MaryE Glory be to God!

Mrs R (Panting with anger)--You can stand there and tell me to my face you're married after making me a promise.

Mr R You had no righ t to make him promise.

MaryE Now ye're talking sense.

Mrs R I'll have you know, it's my affair,not yours.

MaryE An' I'll have ye know I've done everything for that boy but bring him into th e world! I've watched him from his cradle, an' I know h e is his father's son,every inch of him.--Money don't mean nothin' to him. He wants ter be happy,and h e can't b e happy with out the girl he loves, any more than his father could er been happy without you .--(She looks over to brother)--God only knows what h e ever seen in you.--From th e bottom o' my heart I'm glad it happened. So glad--Well, if I had pants on I'd stand righ t on my h ead.--(She goes over to Bab and Don,takes Bab's hand,then Don's)--Congratulations! May God watch over you both an' help yer in everything you'llset out to do!

Don Thanks, aunt Mary.--Give us one of your old-fashioned kisses.

MaryE I will,but I'm th inkin'--yer mother ought ter be the first one to do that.

Mrs R The honor is all yours.

Mr R (Goes over to Bab and Don) My blessings on you both.

(He kisses Bab, shakes h ands h eartily with Don)

Mary E (Going over to door, calls)--Nora! Nora! Come on in here I've got a surprise for you.

(Enter Nora, carrying dress, she is sewing, on her arm)

Nora What's up?

Mary E Bab and Don's married.

Nora That's no surprise to me.

Mrs R Then you---

Nora Sure I've known it. --Let me see, about four months now

Mrs R (To Bab)--Four months! So, that's why.--I suppose you could'nt possibly keep it a secret much longer.

Don (Taking Bab in his arms) No. We could'nt.

Mrs R (Turns to husband) Did you hear that, Michael?

Mr R Sure I did! It was misic to my ears. I'm gonner be a grand father, an' you'll be a grand mother! Kin ye think o' anything finer than God could do for us?

Mrs R He'd do a fine thing if He took your brain out and threw it away.--It hasn't done a bit of good in your head.--They're married, and they're going to have a baby. No money! No home! What are they going to start their married life with ?

Nora A lot! They love each other, and that's everything.

Mrs R My, what a family of lovers I've got! But do any of you stop to think you can't live on love?--(She looks at Don At least not away from your father and mother.

Mr R An' what's the matter with that? Why can't they live here with us?

Mrs R Where? In the kitchen sink?

Mary E Don's gt a room. The bed's king o' narrow, but I don't think they'd mind that so much.

Bab Thanks,aunt Mary. I know you mean well,but I really wauld'n t care to live here.

MrsR What! You would't! Well, young lady, will you please tell me where you would live,or rather where you ~~ooo~~ live?

Bab I would live in one little attic room with my husband, if it were necessary; but it is'nt,because we already have a little ~~k~~ one of our own.

Mrs R (Shocked)--You have what!--(She looks over at husband)-You!ppYou engineered this. That's why you stopped my bank account. That's why I can't get five dollars out of you with out eating my heart out.--You been taking the money that I need to run this house with and putting it into them.--(She snaps)--That's what you been going! So they could get married and have a home of their own. They could'nt possibly start out in a little flat. Oh, no!--Indeed, Mrs Ryan Junior is used to a lot better than that.

Mr R Margret, you're sayin' things you're gonner be sorry for

Mrs R (In uncontrolable temper)--Not half as sorry as she'll be!--(She looks at Bab)--She tricked our boy into marrying her. Sh e could'nt make me believe any different if she took an oath with her hand on a bible.--(She sets her teeth firmly)

Bab I'll never do that! Never! If my word is'nt good enough ~~by~~, you'll just have to go on believing what you like.

Mrs R That means I can take it or leave it---

Bab Exactly.

Mrs R (Panting with indig nation)--(Goes over to son)--You

stand here and let th is girl talk to your mother like that?

Don (In emphatic tone)--My answer to that is--I ashamed of you, mother!

(Mrs R. is so sh ocked, she staggers;then she looks at her husband, th en at Mary E.)

Mrs R You all heard that, and---

Mary E It was comin' to you, Margaret.--Wh at king died and left you his crown? You can't boss the whole world and get away with it.

Mrs R Maybe not the whole world,--but I'll show you all! I am still boss in my own h ome.--(To Don)--Now, you take her and get out of this h ouse,and don't you ever dare come back in to it ag ain.-Not as long as I live anyway

(Don takes h is wife in his arms,about to turn)

Mr R Wait a minute, Don.--(Don looks at father)--Do you know if you put your foot out o' this house now, you're insultin' your father? Ye'll be treatin' me like I was a worm,or if I was dead in my coffin,could'nt move me mouth or me hand.--Goog Lord! They way ye're all actin' ye'd think a man had nothing at all to say in his mmmmm own house.

Mrs R (With a scowling look)--A man h as.

Mr R (Repeats) A man h as? Well that's fine! Now, Don, you take Bab home an' tell her moth er you're both coming here to live with us.

Mary E (To Mrs R)--If you wan ted him to be a monkey you should er called him a man.--(She smiles)--That's the way men are!--(Sarcastically)--Down-righ t contrary.

Mrs R The day she comes in here to live, and I know she will, even if you did buy them a house--she'll come here, if it is only to spite me--the day she comes I go.

Mr R I--I kinder thought you would.

Mrs R (Staggers) What! You--(She looks at Nora)--Did you hear that, Nora?--(She sobs on Nora's shoulder)--He's turning me out to please that girl.

Nora He did'nt mean that, Mom. You know he did'nt.

Mrs R (Sobbing)--Did'nt he? Well, I know he did.--(She stands erect once more)--Michael Ryan, I'm staying here! I am not such a foll as you think I am.

Mr R (Smiling)--Well, now, Margret. Whoever said you was a fool?--(He goes over to her, pats her gently on back)--You're the smartest little wife a man ever had.

Mrs R (Still in defiant mood)--Are you trying---

Mr R No. No, Margret. You're free woman ter do just what you have a mind ter do.--In fact, I give yer credit. I'm doin' what I see fit, an' yer have a right ter do the same.--Yer don't have ter stay here ter please me.

Mrs R Don't let that worry you.--I'm staying here to please myself.

MaryE Now that's settled--what's next on the program?

Don We're going.

(Bab looks at Nora, then at aunt Mary, then at Mr R.)

Bab (Goes over to Mr R)--Good-bye, Dad.

Mr R Not good-bye. You'll be comin' back.

Don No, Dad. Thanks a lot just the same.--A little sunshine is good enough for us.

MaryE Little sunshine! Whrere's that?

Bab Anywhere you're happy.

Mr R Yer can live in a tent for a little while an' be very happy;but there's a time when a tent won't do.

Don It is'nt a tent, Dad. It's a little shack in the country Bab's mother owns it. She gave it to us. We were so happy there week ends you all thought I was spending with Fred Parsons.--Bab named it "Little Sunshine".

Bab (Smiling happily)--It's all windows, with lots of sun streaming in.

Mrs R Yes--and maybe all holes in the roof and lots of rain streaming in.

Don, (Smiling)--I think it did rain a little bit one night; but we did'nt get very wet,--(To his wife)--Did we, dear

Bab We did'nt mind it very much .

Mrs R (To husband)--So,that's the home they have!

Mr R Don't look at me. I didn't buy it.

Mrs R Does that help matters any?--Suppose a good storm comes along?

MaryE You mean a bad storm,don't ye?

Mr R (Chuckling)--Mary Ellen'll never miss a trick.

Mrs R Never mind you and Mary Ellen! I'm talking common sense for you to listen to.

MaryE You always talk sense, Margaret. We all know that.

Mrs R I'm talking to Michael.

MaryE Go ahead an' talk. Who's stoppin' you?

Mrs R (Casting an ugly look at Mary E.,turns to husband)--You heard what she said.--There's a leak in the roof.

Mr R Well, what do you want me to do about it?

Mrs R I don't know.-I--I--Suppose a bad storm does come up.--He's likely to get pneumonia.

Nora He is likely to get pneumonia! What about her?

Mrs R That would'nt be my fault or yours either.

Don (Let's go,Bab!

(Mrs R stands looking at Don,n ot knowing what to say or do)

Nora Wait a minute, Don. (Sh e goes over to her brother)--You know---I don't have to tell you--Mother does'nt want you to go.

Mrs R Who said---

Nora (Ignores her mother's remark)--And Dad, you know how he feels about it,and as far as aunt Mary and I are concerned--it's O.K. with us.

Bab It's awfully sweet of you, Nora,but----

Mr R (Goes over to Bab, takes her hand)--Bab, darlin',throw the "but" away--for my sake.

Don You know, Dad, it is'nt fair. She could never be happy here.

Mr R She can give it a trial.--She'll meet mother halfway.--She loves yer,an' for your sake,if she's only half what I think she is, she'll do it.--(He turns to Bab)--Won't yer, Bab?

Bb (Lost for words)-- You--you must give us a chance to think things over.

Mr R What do you say, Don?

Don I think--(He looks at Bab)--what she thinks.

Mr R You're a chip off th e old block,my boy, an' I'm darned glad of it.

Don (Smiling)--So am I.--Come, Bab. We'll go now.

Mrs R (Sighs deeply, sits down)--Nora, will you fix up a dose of Bromo for me?

Nora Yes.--(She goes to door)

Mrs R You'll find th e bottle in my room on the dresser.

(Exit Nora)

MaryE (Looks at Mrs R then at Don, smiles)--What's your hurry? why don't the two o' ye stay and take supper--I mean dinner--with us?

Bab Mother is expecting me home.

Mrs R Is that so! I was expecting my boy home to dinner to-night---but my expectations don't mean anything. Not any more.--(She dries a tear.--Silence a moment)

Bab (Looks up at Don)--You have your dinner here, Don.--I--I want to be alone to-n ight. I wan t to think things over, all by myself.

(Enter Nora, stirring the Brome, hands it to mother.--Mrs R begins to drink it as Bab turns to door)

Bab I hope your head ache will soon be better, mother.

(At this Mrs R begins to cough . The last swallow went down wrong with the shock of the word"mothr".--She coughs until Mary Kilen slaps her on the back)

MaryE Hey, there! Save some o' yer larynx. Ye'll need it ter eat yer supper with.

Mrs R (Still coughing) It went down th e wrong way.

MaryE Sure it did.--Will yer tell me what---I better save the rest. We h ad en ough here for one day.--(Phone rings)-No, we did'nt! Here comes something else.

(Don goes to phone)

Don Hello!---Yes. ---All righ t.

Mrs R Who is it?

Don Sounds like the maid in Archie's house. She asked to hold th e wire a minute.---Yes,Arch .---(Don listens. The expression in h is face changes.--He is startled but continues to listen)---Whem? I--I--can't tell you how how awfully sorry I am.--Yes.--I will, of course, I will I'll be righ t over.--Yes.--Surely.--Good-bye.---(He hangs up receiver, draws a deep sigh)---

Mr R Archie's mother?

Don Yes.

Nora (In truly sad tone) Is--is she----

Don Yes.--She died just a few moments before Archie got home.

(Mrs R looks from on e to th e other.---Her face takes on a blank expression)

Don (Turns to his mother)--I'm going over, mother. I don't know, when I'll get back.

Mrs R Dinner's almost ready, why don't you----

Don I could'nt eat a bite n ow.--Come on, Bab. I'll take you home first.

Bab You go right up to Archie. Poor boy, he needs you.

Don All right, then. I'll put you in a cabaret---Come on, hurry up! (He takes Bab's hand, draws her to door)--Good night,folks. I may not come home to-night,if Archie wants me to stay till after the fun eral.

Nora Do that, Don. Archie will appreciate it a lot.

Bab Yes. He will.--Good-bye, folks.

Mr R Run in ter-morrow like a good girl, will yer?

Bab (As Don pulls her out of the room)--I'll try.

Mr R (Shakes head sadly)--It's too bad. Poor boy!

Mrs R Yes. I'm sorry for Archie too.--He loved his mother. I know hw did,--but then, she's better off.--She was so helpless. God, in His mercy, would'nt let her suffer any more.

MaryE You're thankin' Him fer th at, I'll bet.--(To Nora)--What ye're gonner do with yer organdie dress now?

Nora I don't know.

MaryE Well, I know you'll never finish sewing that hem now.

Nora I might fool you.

Mrs R You would'nt wear a pink dress, at least not for three months anyway.

Nora (As she turns to go to door)--I migh t fool you too, mother.---(Exit Nora)---

Mrs R (To Mr R.)--What did sh e mean by that?

Mr R Don't ask me! What do I kn ow about girls' notions.

Mrs R (To Mary E.)--I'll bet you kn ow something.

MaryE Me? All I kn ow is Archie's moth er is dead, an' you're damn glad of it.

Mrs R (In decided tone)-- Why would'nt I be? I'd be a hypocrit if I said I was'nt.--Th at woman had oodles of money, but she could'nt enjoy it. --And here we are! We've got our health,--but can we enjoy it?

Mr R I do.

MaryE And I do.

Mrs R Well, I don't,--and I won't, not while there's a chance in the world for me to lay my h ands on money will I keep on cooking and cleaning and scouring pots and wearing

Division Street and bargain basement clothes.---Not on your life! All your talk about my being glad Archie's mother is dead don't fase me in the least. I did'nt kill her. I did'nt h urt a hair in her head

Mary E No, you did'nt. You was good to her. Ypu even sent her twelve bouquets.

Mrs R That I did,---an d for h er funeral I'm sending her a blanket of roses.

Mr R (Quickly and decided ly)---Not fer my money, you won't

Mrs R I'll send it, if I h ave to pawn one of my rings to do it.---What a fool I'd be if I did'nt!

Mr R What a foàl you'be if you do!

(Mr R.,turns, walks out of room.----Mrs R. looks at Mary E.,as if she could unravel the mystery.----Mary E. sees this, hesitates a moment,then---

Mary E (Shrugging her shoulders) Don't ask me.

Curtain.

Act III.

Time: Six months later.

Scene:Living room of Don's and Bab's home on upper end of Riverside Drive.--The room is furnished in good taste, though the furniture is cheap.

As curtain rises Bab is seen at window.

Bab (Calling into next room)--It's snowing hard, Don.

Don (Coming into room)--Don't worry, darling. We'll go if it turns into a blizzard.--Even if we have to take a taxi.

Bab Taxi! All the way to Times Sqare? Not on your life! What do you think this is?

Don (Patting her gently on back)--My birth-day, darling.

Bab Yes, but you're not the king of Siam, and you have'nt got his bank account either.

Don (Taking her in his arms) But I've got you, darling, and all his money could'nt buy you.

Bab Don't ever worry about him making you an offer.--Now, you just forget about taking a taxi.

Don But that's poor economy, Bab. You got that last cold walking in a day like this.

Bab I'll tell you what we'll do. If the snow is good and dry like it is now, that would'nt hurt anybody;but if it turns wet by the time we go, we'll take a taxi to the subway station. Then we'll have no walking at all to do.

Don We'll have some at the other end.

Bab Oh, not so much.-(Baby is heard crying)(Don is about to run in. Bab grabs his arm)--Now you stay right here. You are not home every day.Your birth-day only comes

once a year. All th e oth er days I've got to take care of that abay myself,--so you're not spoiling him for me- not while I'm the least bit conscious.--(Babay continues to cry)

Don You're mean, you are. When Archie insisted I don't come down to th e office to-day,the first thing that cam into my mond--I'd h ave the baby all to myself the whole day.

Bab Sorry to disappoint you,darling; but you don't pick him

Don up.

Don But I can "goo-ga" to him ,can't I?

Bab Sure you can--but you won't--because I have'nt the time to g oo-ga when you're not around.--(Babay ceases crying) There now, do you see that! He stopped crying all by himself.--He does'nt know it, but h e is being trained, and you don't know that you're being trained.--(She looks up into his eyes)--But you are, darling.--(She kisses him)

Don That's what's doing the traing.

Bab (Looks at Don and smiles)--Maybe.--

(She pushes him aside gently,returns quickly with dust-cloth, begins to dust the furniture)--Mmm

Bab Was'nt it nice of aunt Mary---

Don You mean to come over and mind the baby to-night?

Bab Yes. It's awfully sweet of her.

Don She's a good old soul.--I sometimes think there was'nt a man onearth,who deserved to get her for a Wife.

Bab She certainly must be good, or sh e could'nt live with your mother for over twenty eight years.

Don (A little reproachfully)--How Bab----

Bab I did'nt mean to, but somehow no matter how hard I try, to forget those few months we lived in your mother's home, I can't. Everything just insists in popping right out of my mouth.

(Bell rings.--Don goes to open door.--Bab looks into hall.--Door opens and closes.)

Don (From hall)--Come right in, Arch.

(Enter Arch and Don)

Arch Hello, Bab! How're you feeling?

Bab Fine.--What's the matter with you? You got a cold or something?

Arch I'm all right, just---

Bab I'm stupid!

Arch No. You're not. You're interested, that's all, and it feels good to know some one---(He stops a moment, turns to Don)--Got something for you-all, boy!--(He takes a small package from pocket, h ands it to Don),--With all my good wishes.

Don (Taking package)--Thanks.--(He begins to open package)--I feel like a school boy home from school on his birthday, waiting for his friends to come and bring him prese sents.

Bab (Smiling)--You were'nt really waiting---

Don Well--er--I'd be a little bit disappointed, if--(The package is now open. He looks at it)--Look at this, Bab!

Bab (Looking at it)--Whata handsome wallet! Alligator, is'nt it?

Don Yes. I guess so.--(He turns to Arch)--Say! I certainly

appreciate you giving me a present; but what's the idea of a wallet?

Arch That's all right, Don. Two good cases came in last night after you'd left the office and one this morning.--It won't be long now---

Don I'll bet th ey're all friends of yours.

Arch The two are, but th e one that came in this morning--- I don't know him from Adam.--And suppose they were all my friends! What's the difference? You do all the work, don't you?--If you got all th e clients and did the work too, what would you need a partner for?

Don I wish you could stand up in court and lie like that.

Arch (Laughs)--So do I.

Don (Don takes some bills from his pocket)--Well, I might as well put this in.---(He looks up at Bob.-----Opens wallet, sees something in it, takes out a check)--What's this!--(He looks at it)--Five hundred dollars, made out to me)-(He looks at Arch)--What's the big idea!--You don't really think I'd---

Arch Now, hold your horses!--It's not a present. It's a surprise. A thousand dollar check came in last night. That five hundred is yours.

Don Say, how is it all these wonderful things happen when you're in the office?--Noth ing ever happens, when I'm there,--well, not very much anyway.

Arch Now, you, look here. I'm not a liar, and I can prove it. When you come to the office to-morrow-----

Don Then you won't be th ere.

Arch (Laughs)--Well, maybe I won't, but if you wait till I get these---

Don Then I'll wait and wait some more.

Arch All jokes aside, Don, that money is yours. It really is Now, put it in your wallet and don'd be so suspicious.

Don All right,--(He puts ch eck in wallet)--but this will never be cashed till I know.

Arch Well, I got to be going. I'm on th e job to-day.

Bab I'll bet you're glad Don$ only got one birth-day a year.

Arch I'll bet.

(Bell rings)

Bab I'll open.----(Sh e runs out)

Arch (Looking after Bab)--Some girl!

Don Yes. She's a peach.

Arch (Hesitatingly) How--how's Nora?

Don She's fine.--Say, why could'nt you two be just good friends?

Arch It's just the way she wants it to be.

(Enter Bab, hands Don a telegram.--He opens it)

Don (Reads)--Very best wishes to my dear boy, Mother Illington

Arch She's in Portsouth, is'nt she?

Bab Yes, with an aunt of mine.--(A sigh)--I miss her so much! Don wanted het to stay with us, but she would'nt. She thinks young people should be left alone.

Arch She's got the right idea.--Maybe I ought'nt hang around here so much.

Don See here! If I th ought you meant that, I'd---

Arch I know. Iknow. You two would'nt mind if I came here bgg and baggage to live here for good.

Don That would'nt be a bad idea, would it, Bab?

Bab I'd like it!

Don So would I!--How about it, Archie?

Arch Don't be a fool!

Bab I don't see why-----

Arch Don't you? Well, I do. We're partners in business--fifty fifty--but when it comes to a wife,--I'm not so sure you would like that so much.--(He goes to door)--Good-bye, see you in the morning, Don, or my maybe in the afternoon.

Don Or mgybe at night.

Arch (Laughs)--Maybe.--(He is about to leave)--Oh, Don! You remember me saying I did'nt know what to buy for the baby's christening.--I honestly don't!--I am a hell of a God-father.--Suppose you use that five hundred to buy him what you think he can use.

Don (Looks at him a moment, begins to understand)--You---

(Arch rushes out, before Don can say another word)

Don Is'nt it too bad a fine fellow like that to be so lackin in ambition!--I wonder if that's the only thing Nora's got against him?

Bab It's n ot that alone.

Don Then what is it? Girls tell girls---maybe you know.

Bab I do!--It's just <u>one little thing</u>-----she does'nt love him.

Don To bad! If she did I think she could do something with him.--A man will do anything for a girl he is crazy about, and he sure is crazy about her.

Bab He sure is, poor kid. He asked me to talk to her.

Don Did you?

Bab (A sigh)--I did--but it's no use. She's in love with Jerry.

Don Nice fellow, but h e's clean broke.

Bab She knows that. He's a go-getter, she says. She's got lots of faith in him. Sh e is sure he won't stay down for long, and what's more, I'm afraid, whether it's long or sh ort, she's going to wait for him.

(Bell rings)

Don (Going to door)--More telegrams!---(From hall)--- Hello How come so early?

Mrs R (As she comes th rough hall)--It's no fault of ours. We were expecting to spend the whole evening with you,

(Mrs R, Mary E. also Norine enter.--Mrs R carries a large package, Norine and Mary E. each carry a smaller one)-----but Nora told us you we re going to the theatre (She throws package on chair)-----Give me your pen knife

Don I'll open it.---(He opens package, looks at it)--What's This?

Mrs R What does it look like? A blanket, of course! I could' not think of anything you'd want more than that. It's the very same kind you layed covered with at home,and I know how you loved it.

(Bab is speaking to Norine)

Don Is that one blanket or two?

Mrs R One, of course. This is your birth-day, not Bab's.

Don But we've got two beds.

Mary E That's what I told your moth er, but--well, I better not say any more.--Here's a good, old-fashioned kiss

for your birth-day---(She kisses him heartily)--an' hm here's something to blow your nose in. Nice ones! To nice to give to th e laundry!--(She turns to Bab)--You ought ter do these up yourself, they'll last twice as long.

Bab I will, aunt Mary.

(Don hands Bab the box of handkerchiefs.--Bab opens them.--Norine goes over to Don)

Nora Many happy returns! (She kisses him)

Bab Oh, these are lovely!

(Mrs R looks around the room, in hopes of finding something to complain about)

Mrs R What was the idea of selecting such a dull looking carpet?

Don (Not knowing what to say)--I--I--

Bab I selected the carpet.

Mrs R (Coldly) I thought so.

Don (In hopes of cutting short th e conversation)--Don't you want to see th e baby, mother?

Mrs R Of course I do.

Bab (Quickly going to door)--Just a minute. I'll see if he is asleep.

Mrs R (Indignantly)--Suppose he is asleep! We can look at him, can't we?

Nora No, you can't, mother. It disturbs a baby to gap at him while he sleeps.

Mrs R Indeed! What do you know about it? I don't see anything the matter with you or your brother--and anyone that wanted to gap at you gapped,--All this nonsense---(She pa sees Bab, walks in with a look of defiance)

Don (A hopeless look in his eyes)--She won't wake him,Bab.

MaryE (Angrily)--Lemme tell you something, Don. When you was a baby I put you to sleep. I'd crown th e person with a rolling pin that went inter your room.

Bab It's all right, aunt Mary.--It's Don's birth-day.--Please don't start anyth ing.

Mrs R (Entering)- He is a darling! Pretty as a picture.

MaryE Ain't he though! The dead spit o' Bab.

MrsR Where's your eyes, Mary Ellen? His nose, his little ears back on his head, just like Don's.--You remarked it more than once, didn't you, Nora?

Nora Yes. He does look a little bit li ke Don.

Don And a whole lot like his mother.

Nora Great Scott! What's th e difference who he looks like,or what he looks like as long as he's h ealthy!

Mrs R Is he healthy, Don?

Don (Proudly)--He sure is.

Mrs R That's some credit coming to Bab. You know it's nearly alw ys the mother that can make or break a child.

MaryE And I suppose you deserve all th e credit for your two wonderful children?

Mrs R Well--n o--not all. I must admit you helped me a lot with mine.

MaryE (Looking at Mrs R. sarcastically)--You must admit!---

(Bell rings.--Don goes to door.)

Mrs R I'll bet that's Archie. He would'nt miss Don'd birth-day.

Bab Archie just left before you came in.

(Mrs R looks disappoin ted)

Don (From hall)--Hello, Dad!

Nora Dad!

Mr R (From hall)--Congratulations, my boy!

Don (Coming into room) Thanks, Dad.

Mrs R Michael! You never broke away from work, not evevn the day Don was born.

Mr R Why would I leave my work th e day h e was born? He was nothin' ter look at, was he?--But to-day--(He claps Don heartily on th e shoulder)--Well,look at him yerself! Ain't it worth while?

Mrs R Yes, but was'nt it worth while lookong at the mother who suffered to bring him into the world for you ?

Mr R (Goes over to wife, takes her in his arms)--Sure! Sure, darlin', it was;but you're forgettin' I was'nt me own boss then.--When I told the boss I was expecting me wife to have a bab y that day, he said:well, ye'll git what you are expectin' an' a whole lot more.--An' he whispered in me ear--(He looks over at Don)--Ye'll be a damn sight better off h ere in the plant than ye'll ever be in yer own home from th is day on--that's if th e kid lives.--(He looks at wife)--And was'nt it so, wife? Did'nt he turn our n ice quiet little home into a seethin' bedlam? Sure the machinmery in th e plant was music to me ears in comparison ter the---Say! I bet you remember some o' his high notes.--(He turn s to Bab)--You want ter thankin' God <u>your</u> boy is'nt takin' after his father.

Bab That's because I'm training him differently.

Mrs R Do you mean to insinuate I did'nt train my children properly?

Bab Nearly all children of the past generation was'nt brought up properly.

Mrs R Well, that's at least an admission on your part.

Mary E Say! Did you come here to congratulate Don on his brth-day, or is this th e usual Ryan battle?

(Bell rings.--Don goes to door.--Mr R. goes to door, look out into hall)

Don (From hall)--Yes. I am Donald Ryan.--No.--I saidno. I did'nt buy any furniture.--I don't care whether it's paid or not! It does'nt belong to me.

Mr R (Calls out)--Yes, it does, Don! Let the men bring it in.

Mrs R What do you call that!

Mr R Well you was ashamed Don would invite some o' our friends to his house--an' you was ash amed o' the furniture.--Now you won't have ter be ash amed any more!--Wait till yer see this stuff!--No matter who comes in here now, you'll be able ter strut like a peacock.

Don (From hall)--Look out for th e wall there!

Mrs R (Looks at husband in astinishment)--Are you in your right mind?

Mr R Sure I am, darlin'.--I did'nt want you to keep on walkin' around with yer head down. No, sirree! Not while I could help it!

(Enter Don, followed by two men carrying an expensive couch)

Man Where does this go? ---(No answer)--

Nora Where do you want this, Bab?

Bab (Looks around the room)--I think it would look best where the old couch stan ds.

(Men move old couch into middle of room,put new one in it's place.--Exit men)--

Mr R (To wife)--What do you think o' that piece o' furniture?

Mrs R I think when the Lord made you he thought He was making a monkey.

Mr R Well, now, that don't speak very well for you an' the kids.

MaryE And how about me?

Mr R Sure--sure--you too, Mary Ellen.--(He goes over, looks at couch)--Ain't th is the fine piece o' furniture though! Now wait till yer see th e rest!

Mrs R (Her eyes and mouth open wide)--What! You mean to tell me---

Mr R Why, sure. How would th is couch look alongside o' this other stuff? Yer friends would have a good laugh at yer. They'd think we don't know noth in'.

Don Dad, I wish you had'nt done this.--Not that I don't appreciate it! But we would'nt enjoy it! How can we, when we both know h ow hard you've got to struggle to get along!

(Enter men, carrying large over-stuffed chair)

Man Where does this go?

Don Where, Bab?

Bab Over there.--(She points to opposite side of room.)

(Men place chair---Exit men)---

Mr R (Beaming with joy)--Well, how do like this one, Bab?

Bab (Enthused)--I love it, Dad; but Don's right.--We won't be able to enjoy it, because we know, you can't afford it.

Mr R Now, look here, Don! When I told you I had that money put aside for you, you thought it was a black lie; but it honestly was'nt.--

Don No, it was'nt, it was a <u>white</u> lie;-but a lie it <u>was</u> and it <u>is</u>.--You never put any money aside for me.--You did

not have to. You had plenty, and God only knows, whatever you had was ours.

Nora (Just waking up to the truth)--That's right! And I was dunce enough to believe-----

Don Did he hand you that same blarney?

Nora Sure, and I swallowed it.

Mrs R I'd just like to know why it is, Michael Ryan, that you try to force things on to your children.--I fairly have to cry before I can get something out of you.

(Baby is heard crying.--Mrs R. rushes to door)

Don Please, don't go in, Mom.

Mrs R Don't go in! Don't you hear h im crying?

Bab Let him cry, it will strengh ten his lungs.

Mrs R He's a Ryan! You don't have to worry about his lungs.

Bab (As Mrs R is about to go in)-- I am training my baby not to be picked up when he cries.

Mrs R Oh, you are! --But you're not training--(She walks out, throwing Bab a look of defiance)

Mary E Michael, ye better take her home.----(She places hand over her chest)--I can feel somethin' in here comin' on me. If it comes out like it feels inside, she'll remember Don's twenty sixth birth -day as long as she lives.

Bab (Going over to aunt Mary)--O! Please don't, aunt Mary.

(Enter mm with another chair)

Nora (Trying to attract aunt Mary's attention)--Oh, aunt Mary! Look at this! I like this piece the best of the three.

(Baby's crying ceases)

Man Who signs this?--(He holds out receipt)

Mr R Give it to me, I'll sign.

(Man hands receipt to Mr R.. He signs it, hands it to man;then takes a bil from his wallet,hands it to man)

Man Thanks.-----(Exit man)

Mrs R (Entering)--The little darling!--He looked up at me.-You'd really think he wanted to say something.

MaryE Maybe he does,--(Sh e looks at Mrs R. critically)--but I think it is just as well th at he can't.

Mrs R You need'nt throw any slurs. You know I love that baby I'd do anything for him.

(Don is removeing th e old chairs.--Norine is helping him)

Mr R Would yer---Well, this is his house!--I'll bet, if he could talk, h e'd tell yer how he loves this new furniture.

Mrs R I guess he would like it--to jump on and stick the scissors th rough, th e same as his father used to do to ours.

Don (As he is moving the couch with h is father helping him)--He'll never $ jump on that furniture, not while Bab's around.

Mrs R (To Bab)--You'll leave th at child alone! It is'nt his fault, his grand-father is darned fool enough to put such furn iture in his home. That child will very likely think the furniture was <u>bought</u> for him to jump on.--Come on, Nora. We promised the tailor we'd be there for our fitting--(She looks at her watch)-- We are fifteen minutes late now.

Mr R (Entering)--That's a nice blanket you bought for Don! B But what good is one blanket for two beds?

Mrs R (Angrily)--One blanket is enough for one man's birthday present.--(She looks around the room)--Where's Don? (She goes to door, calls)--Don! We're going. Nora and I.

Don (From oth er room)--I'll be in in a minute, Mom.

(Phone rings.--Bab takes up receiver)

Bab Hello!--Yes--yes, Archie.-- (At th e mention of "Archie" Mrs R is all attention)--Wh y, no. It will be all right with me.--Sure.--Why not?--Business before pleasure.--Oh I see.----(Enter Don)--Here's Don. He'll speak to you. Now don't let that worry you.--I know you're doing the best you can.----(She looks at Don, hands h is receiver)

Don Hello, Archie! What's it all about?---Now, don't be an idiot!--Of course I will.--I'll be right down.--I'll take a taxi.--Bab? Now, you know her better than that! All right. Good-bye.--(He hangs up receiver)

Mr R Anything wrong?

Don No,on the contrary.--There is a client waiting in the office to see me.--He's an old pal of mine. Arch says, it's a big case.--

(Bab rushes to get Don's h at and coat, hands them to him)

Don I'll be seing you ~~hhhhh~~ soon again.

Mrs R Wait a minute,Don! Nora'll run you down.

Nora Sure I will.--(To mother)--I'll drop you off at the tailor. I'll be back by th e time h e'll be ready for me

(They go to door.--Mrs R turns)

Mrs R Don't be late for dinner, Michael. We're going to the pictures to-nigh t,and I want to get there for the first performan ce.

(Exit all th ree)

Mr R And I th ought I was gonner get to sleep early to-night

MaryE You will,--only you'll be sittin' down instead of lay-ing down.

Mr R (laughs)--I g uess ye're right there.

MaryE (Looks at Bab)--He guesses!

(Bab goes over to Mr R.,puts her arms around his neck)

Bab You're a darling! But you do deserve a scolding.--(She looks at the new furniture)--You should'nt hve bought this stuff. You know you can't afford it.

Mr R Now let me ask you someth ing! Am I too old to have a litle fun?

MaryE That depends on what kind er fun.

Mr R Any kind o' fun! Goin' ter clubs, playin' cards, drin kin' a little champagne once in a while, goin' off on a little trip all by meself.

Bab I don't think you're too oldfor that.

Mr R Well, now you just stop to think how much money that would cost.

Bab (Smiles)--Quite some.

Mr R A lot more than this furniture costs. A whole lot more! So, you see, I'm still savin' money.

MaryE I never did see a man that could save so much money and have so little of it.--You're a wonder, you are!--Only I'm wondering if ye'll have enough ter pay next month's rent.--(To Bab)--Is it time ter change the baby?

Mr R Change the baby!

Bab (laughs) She means, change the beby's napkin.

Mr R Change his napkin!--Why, was he eatin' anything?

MaryE She means, change th e baby's diaper.

Mr R Well, I'll be----(To Bab)--Say, what kind of English do you talk anyhow? Napkin means diaper!--Ain't it a napkin I stick in front o' me collar when I eat?--(He stops to think a moment)--Glory be ter God!--You don't meanter tell me---No!--No. That'd be too small fer his-No!--(He shakes his head fondly)--He'd need four o' them sewed together.

Bab (Pats him gently on the shoulder)-- Don't worry, Dad! Yu're safe as far as the napkin goes.--He wears a diffe rent brand altogether.--(She goes to door)--I'll change him, and it is his feeding time too.---(Exit Bab)

Mr R (Laughs) Feedin' time!--Mary Ellen! You remember Mom with the kids?

MaryE Yes. It was feeding time, when ever they hollered fer it

Mr R (Laughs)--An' it was a lot o' h ollering you did, old girl.

MaryE I must er been a smart kid. The only way ter get some-thing is ter make a holler for it.

Mr R You stopped h ollering a long time ago.

MaryE Did'nt have nothin' ter h oller for.--Got everything I want.

Mr R Wish I thought so.

MaryE Yer never didthink right.-- If yer did you'd have darn little ter worry about now.

Mr R (Comes close to MaryE.,talks in low tone)--Lemme tell yer somethin'. I got lots ter worry about.

MaryE That's why ye bought this.--(She looks at furniture)

Mr R A little more worry on top o' what I got now won't make such an awful difference.--I owe a little pleasure ter meself. I get such a kick out'er seing the kids happy.

Mary E So do I. But use yer head a little! Do you think they can be happy wh en they know ye're worryin'?

Mr R How would they know I'm worryin'?

MaryE How would they know?--Go, take a look at yerself in the lookin' glass.--Not at yer tie, but at yer face.-Take a good look an' ye'll see!--You look ten years older than you did a yearago,--an' you're a all gray too.

Mr R Father was gray when he was forty.

MaryE Yes, but yer did'nt notice his gray hair.His cheeks ws pink an' h e did'nt have a wrinkle. An' it was'nt because he did'nt work hard. He csarried more ice on his back than you did, but he knw how to manage.--When he had the money we had butter on our bread.--When he did'nt we went with out, an' it did'nt kill any of us.

Mr R I kin see you ai'nt much fer this furniture, an' I thought you'ld be tickled ter death.

MaryE I would be, if yer bought it with money you could spare.--But giving th e devil his dues, --ye're skimpin', and crimpin' on Margaret all th e time.--It's got so, she is even afraid ter hand you a doctorw bill.--An' here you go----

Mr R Golly, Mary Ellen? Yer don't seem ter understand.--(His face takes on an expression of intense pride)--You're fergettin' Don's a lawyer.

MaryE Sure he is; but if Father made a lawyer outer you, would he do what you're doin'?--You know he would'nt? He'd say:Deary, I had ter plug my way up der hill.Now you plug yours.--An that's wh y he remained a healthy

strappin' man an' lived ter be eighty eight years old.

Mr R Yes,--an' I'm gonner live th at long too.

Mary E Maybe you will, --an' maybe you won't. An' it ain't a fifty-fifty bet on the will either.

Mr R Now you wait an' see if I don't fool yer.

MaryE I hope ye're right, Michael; but take it from me, the most wearin' and tearin' on the body an' soul is worrying. It eats right inter yer heart an' liver. An what it does to yer brain!--Do ye think I don't know why you fall asleep in yer chair, sometimes while we be talkin' to you.--You're all fagged out!--Yer don't sleep nigh ts--you lay awake worryin'.--Michael, you are an ass!--You're committing suicide slowly and surely for yer children.--An' what do ye think is gonner happen after ye're dead an' gone!--Of coumse, they'll feel very bad,--an' Margaret will scream and get hysterical; but take it from me, Time heals everything.--The ch ildren will go back to theur pleasures Margaret'll have yer insuran ce money, an'she might even get married again, while you'll be layin' in the cold ground.

Mr R But I won't be worryin', will I?

MaryE (Sighs)--It's no use!--Nothin'll ever ---

Bab (Entering) How about a cup of h ot tea, Dad, and

Mr R some nice home-bkked biscuits?

Mr R No, darlin'. I--I got a little shoppin ter do yet fer (He hesitates)--fer mother.

Bab It won't take a minute,Dad. The kettle is on.

Mr R No. No, maybe when I get back.--I--I mean--next time I come.

Bab (Looking at couch with admiration)--All right, Dad. Be sure and come again soon.

Mr R (Noticing Bab admiring furniture)--Glad you like my pick. I was kinder 'fraid maybe---

Bab I could'nt have selected anything I liked better.--(Her eyes sparkle as she turns to Mary E.) Is'nt it lovely, aunt Mary?

Mary E Glad you like it, Bab .

Bab Like it!--I can't find words that would make you understand.

Mr R (Patting Bab gently on shoulder)--I kin understand, darlin'.--(He looks at Mary E.)--If yer kept up filling me up with champag ne from now till the end o' me life I could'nt get more pleasure out of it than this.--Look at 'er! Her eyes are dancin' right out o' her head (He pinches Bab's cheek.--She kisses h im)--Now I must be goin'.--Where's me hat? Oh, yes, I left it in the hall.

(Bell rings)

Bab I wonder who th at can be!

Mr R (Goes to door)--Yer don't have ter go. Who ever it is, I'll let him in--that is, if it ain't a book agent. I hate them fellers. One of them stuck me once.

MaryE Anybody could stick you.

Mr R (Standing in door-way) I ain't half the fool you think I am.

MaryE No, you ain't. You're th e whole fool I <u>know</u> ye are.--(As bell again rin gs loudly)--Whoever that is got his nerve with him.

Mr R It's a book agent all right. Let 'im ring.

(Mr R goes out followed by Bab.--Mary E goes to door, looks into hall.

Mr R (From hall)--Hello, Archie! Glad ter see ye.--Sorry I can't stay, but I'll be seing yer again.

Bab (From hall) Good-bye, Dad.

Mr R Good-bye.------(Door is h eard closing)

Bab (From hall)--What brough t you back?

Arch (From hall)--Anyone here besides yourself?

Bab Just aunt Mary.

Arch (From hall)--I'd like to talk to you about something. Is aunt Mary going to stay?

Bab (From hall)--Oh, she's all right. You can say anything you like.

Arch (From hall)--I'd rather not.--(Mary E is listening)-- It would be a little embarrassing for me.

(Mary E goes into other room)

Bab All right, Archie.

(They enter. Bab looks around the room)

Bab I guess sh e is in the kitchen looking for something to do.

Arch (Looking at new furniture)--How did this happen?

Bab Don's birth -day present from Dad.--Like it?

Arch Swell!--Funny how this happened! That's what I was hoping Dad would buy h with that check; but, gosh, the couch alone costs more than five h undred.--That old man's a prince all right.

Bab Hey, there! Don't you call h im old man. We don't even want to think of him getting old.

(Enter Mary E., hat and coat on. She is putting on gloves)

MaryE (Looks up at Archie)--Hello, Arch! Where'd you come from? I did'nt know you were here.

Arch Just came.--You going out?

MaryE Yes. Awful sorry to have to deprive you of my company.

Arch Sorry to have you go.

MaryE (Looks at Archie, smiling) I'm glad you're sorry. (She is trying to pull her glove on, turns to Bab)--This is where your mother-in-law gets the pair of gloves she was expecting.--She bough t 'em for me for Christmas.--Too small!--(She goes to door)--Is there anything you might be needin'? I'll get it for you while I'm out.

Bab That's an idea! I need oranges, about half a dozen, and prunes, a two-pound package.

MaryE (Going to door)--An ything else?

Bab No. I g uess that will be all.

Mary E You might as well think of some more. You know that won't take me very long to buy.

Bab Well, if you don't mind going to the drug store, will you please get me a can of Baby Talcum, and a paper of medium sized pins,safety pins.

Mary E Safety pins! In a drug store?

Bab Why, yes. They carry safet y pins.

Mary E (As she goes out)--I'm thinkin' some day the drug stores will carry some drugs.

(Exit Mary E.--Bab and Archie laugh)

Bab Do you think sh e is going out to do some shopping for herself?

Arch Is'nt she?

Bab No. She very likely heard our conversation in the hall.

Arch Awfully fine of her.--(He stops to think a moment)--Great Scott! I hope sh e does'nt misunderstand!

Bab You don't understand aunt Mary Ellen if you talk like that; besides noth ing in th e world could ever convince her that I would----

Arch Yes. Yes, of course. She knows you're all right. --I did'nt stop to think of that point.

Bab Now tell me what's it all about.--What's on your mind?

Arch Bab, ~~kaikxmm~~ to tell you the truth I don't know how to begin.

Bab Shall I begin for you?

Arch (Looking downward)--If you could, it would help a lot.

Bab All rhgh t then.--Let's sit down, over there on my nice new couch.--(Sh e walks to couch)--Come on!--(Archie walks over. They sit down)--You want to know, did I speak to Norine, and what sh e said.

Arch (Whispers)--Yes.

Bab Archie, she's in love with Jerry Kearney.

Arch Are you guessing at that, or--or did she tell you?

Bab (Hesitates a moment)--I--I'm not guessing.--(She looks up, sees the sad look in his eyes)--I'm sorry, awfully sorry. Archie.--I--I--thought, at least, I hoped, you would understand if there was anything to tell, that is, anything you would loke to hear, I would have told you.

Arch I tried to feel that way, but then--(A deep sigh)--it's awfully hard for anyone to understand.

Bab I understand, Archie.--There was a time when Don told me, he did'nt love me. He was trying to break away to please his mother.--I'll never forget that moment! Never, till the day I close my eyes in death!--(She places her hand over his)--Poor boy! I wish I knew what to say to you, or how to advise you, but I don't!-- I know, anything I would say would sound heartless or foolish.

Arch There's just one thing I can't quite understand. Bab, you know as well as I do Norine hates poverty, and that fellow is as poor as a church mouse.

Bab I know it, and so does she, but she <u>loves</u> him.

Arch You know the old saying: When poverty comes to the door love flies out of th e window.

Bab That might be so; but th e only thing you can possibly do is---to wait and see.

Arch (Sighs, rises)--And so that's that.

Bab (Rises)--Why not take a trip abroad, Archie? It might help you to forget.

Arch I was thinking of that, but----

Bab I know, the office!

Arch Yes. I want to make sure Don can make good living out of it before I---

Bab Then it <u>is</u> as Don says---the clients are all yours.

Arch Suppose they are! Don gives them their moneys worth, and those fellows all know it.--So, after a while they'll come to him, whether I'm in New York or China.

Bab But it is'nt fair to let you make such a sacrifice for us.

Arch Can that, Bab! It's no sacrifice at all. It's giving me something to think about, in fact, something to live for.

Bab (Her eyes open wide)--You---you would'nt----

Arch I said, I've got someth ing to <u>live</u> for, and----

(Phone rings)

Bab (At phone)--Hello!--Yes, darling.--Yes.--(She puts hand over receiver, to Archie)--Shall I tell him you're here?---(Archie sh akes his head.---She removes hand from receiver)--Why, no, Don.--I don't mind, not in the least.--Yes.--I'll take a taxi to the subway.--Fine!--I'll be right th ere.--No--O. I'll be on time I won't keep you waiting.--What?--I guess she will.--<u>Sure</u> she will.--All right, darling. All right!--Good-bye.-----(She hangs up receiver.--To Archie)---He's got to see a Mr Mason, at seven o'clock. He can't very well hot home in time, so we'll meet in Gray's drug store.--And after the show he is going to take me to some swell place. I can have my choice! Isn't it wonderful after all I've been through?

Arch It's good to see you two so happy.--Say, you just give me a ring before you leave. I'll come and take you down in my car.

Bab But you didn't want Don to know!

Arch Oh, that'll be all right. Suppose he does know? He'll understand.

Bab Just as you say, Archie.--Where will I ring?

Arch Wait a moment! I've got an idea! Suppose I take you down to the office. If Don can take care of you, all right, if not, I'll take you where ever you'ld like to

go and then back to meet Don.--What do you say? Can you manage it?

Bab — I guess I can. Aunt Mary's here. I can trust her with the baby--for any length of time.

Arch — Good! Then I'll come back for you say in an hour.

Bab — How about waiting righ t h ere?

Arch — No. I want to change my clothes. I might feel a little fresher.

Bab — All right, Archie. I'll try to be ready when you come (Bell rings)--Just a minute!--She runs out to open door)--- Hello! Did you forget something?

Mrs R — (Coming into room)-- No. I've been wanting to see you alone.--(She sees Archie)--Hello, Archie! I'm right glad to see you.

Arch — Glad to see you, Mrs Ryan. How've you been?

Bab — Excuse me a moment. I think there's something boiling over on the stove.

(Mrs R. nods sweetly as Bab goes out)

Mrs R — I wish I could tell you I've been well and happy,but that would'nt be true.--(She sighs)--How can I be happy, when my very heart's desire has been snatched away from me?

Arch — You mean Don?

Mrs R — No. Of course that wound is still fresh, but I suppose Time heals everything. It's not that, that's grieving me now.--It--it's Norine. She--she--well, I just can't make her out.

Arch — You mean about me?

Mrs R — Yes.

Arch You know she is in love with Jerry.

MrsR I know nothing of the sort! And she does'nt either.--She's infatuated, that's all it is. He is a big fine-looking brute, can use his legs faster than most men, and can bat a ball like Babe Ruth she says.--That's what's taking her fancy! That's all it is,Archie!--Take it from me, if you'd only take my advice and hold on, she is bound to come to her senses sooner or later.

Arch (Trying to change the subject, smiles, looks around the room)--I'm awfully glad to see this new furniture,are'nt you?

Mrs R Yes. A rather expensive birth-day present, don't you think?

Arch Well, yes; but then, Mrs Ryan loves to make his children happy.

MrsR Mr Ryan! How about Mrs Ryan?

Arch Of course that means Mrs Ryan too.

MrsR (Looks at chairs)--Those chairs are'nt placed right. they'd look much better, if----Come on, Archie! Give me a hand, and I'll change them around.

Arch Bab might'nt like it.

Mrs R She will, when she sees how much better it will look. You know, she has'nt been in many real nice homes. She really doesn't know.--(She goes over to a chair)--Come on, before she comes in. Even if she does'nt like it she'll leave it that way; and I know how much nicer the room will look when I've arranged it.--(She places hands on arms of chair)--Come on!--(Archie helps place chair on spot she suggested)--Now, let's take that chair and put it over here.--(He helps her place chair)--I'd

like to move the couch too, if you would help me.

Arch I think you better ask Bab's permission to do that.

Mrs R Bab's permission, indeed!

Arch You'll pardon me, Mrs Ryan. I've got to be going.---(He goes to door leading to kitchen,calls)--I'm going, Bab. See you later.

Bab (From kitchen)--All right, Archie.

Arch (Goes to door leading to hall)-- Sorry, I could'nt accomodate you . Some other time perhaps, if it is agreeable to Bab.--Good-bye, Mrs Ryan.

Mrs R Good-bye, Archie. Run in to see us some time.

Arch (Leaving)--I will.

(Mrs R looks at couch a moment, attempts to move it but cannot, tries and tries again.-----Bell rings)

Mrs R (Calls)--I'll open th e door, Bab.

Bab (From kitchen)--All righ t, mother. I'll be in in a few minutes.

(Mrs R goes to open door, then is heard from hall)

Mrs R Where were you?

Mary E (Coming through into room,carrying packages)--Just went out to get e few things for Bab.--What brought you back?

Mrs R You'll see in a few minutes.

Mary E Say, are you gonner start something again?

Mrs R Are you gonner quit telling me what to do?

Mary E God Himself could'nt tell you wh at to do, even for your own good.

Mrs R If God can't, where do you git on?

Mary E Well, I'll tell you. I'm right here where you can see an' hear me, an' you'll see an' hear what you don't expect.

if yer came to make trouble again.---(Enter Bab)---Here are yer prunes an' oranges an' safety pins.--I'll put them in the kitchen.---

(She casts a look of warning at Mrs R.,as she leaves room.------Bab sees chairs h ave been re-arranged, stops to think a moment, says nothing.)---

Bab Was'nt Norine supposed to meet you at the tailor's?

Mrs R I arraged with the tailor to tell her I have a severe headache.

Bab Have you?

Mrs R No. I have'nt. I just want to have a little talk with you

Bab (Looks at her a moment)--Yes?--

Mrs R I've got a favor to ask of you, Bab.

Bab (Surprised)--A favor of me?

Mary E (Coming into room again)--Kinder cold in the baby's room No heat in the radiator.

Bab I don't turn it on, aunt Mary. Th e baby loves the cold. He is used to it.

Mrs R That's one thing I'll say for Bab, the baby looks healthy and happy, and h e would'nt be th at, if he was'nt comfor table.

Mary E (Looks at Mrs R a moment)-- Are you sick?

Mrs R No.---Why?

Mary E Well, I don' know. I---

Bab (To Mrs R)--You were saying---

Mrs R I was saying---(She looks at Mary Ellen)

Mary E You'd like me out o' this room, would'nt yer?

Mrs R Just for a few min utes, Mary Ellen.

(Mary E looks at Bab a moment, then at Mrs R.,goes over to couch, sits down)

Mrs R You think I'm going to pick on Bab . I'm not.

MaryE Ain't yer?--Well so much th e more reason I should sty

Bab Mother Ryan's got a little favor to ask of me.

MaryE Oh! Has sh e? I would'nt miss hearin' that ferthe world (She sits up straight, then smoothes her dress, claps her hands in her lap, ready for what may happen)

Bab (To Mrs R)--After all---we should'nt mind. Aunt Mary means so well by us all.

Mrs R Perhaps a little too well.

MaryE You did'nt think that when yer kids were cuttin' their teeth, and yer were gettin' yer n ight's rest.--Ye're taking yer rain with yer sun-shine!You don't like me sittin' here, but I'm sittin'.

Mrs R Well, It took me a long time to make up my mind to do this, so I'm not putting it off again.--Bab, you and Norine are pretty close friends, are'nt you?

Bab I--I think a lot of Norine, ans--and I think she likes me too.

Mrs R I'm pretty sure sh e does.--Did you--did you ever try to give h er a little advice?

Bab (Stops to think a moment)--I--I don't know. Perhaps I did.--I really can't remember.

Mrs R Do you think if you did try to give her some advice--- Do you th ink she'd take it?

Bab That all depends on what kin d of advice it would be. If it was good, that is, if she <u>thought</u> it was good, I'm inclined to th ink she <u>would</u> take it.

Mrs R You know, Bab, sometimes a young like Norine does'nt really know wh at is good for her.---She only finds

finds that out, after it is too late, after she's fallen into a mess, that she can't crawl out of.

Bab No fear of Norine ever falling into a mess. She's to clever for that.

MrsR I used to think she was clever, but she's not. If she was, she would'nt throw up such a chance.

Bab You mean Archie?

Mrs R Yes, of course. Do you know other girl who would be fool enough to hope and wait for a man that has'nt the price of a wedding ring, when she can marry a man like Archie, and have everything she can wish for?

Bab But I don't understand, Ma--She's in love with Jerry.

Mrs R I don't think she is so terribly in love with Jm.He's a good-looking chap and an all-around sport. That's what's taking her eye!

MaryE Well, I don't mind tellin' yer, I'd go a few steps out o'me way to get a good look at him.

Mrs R Mgybe <u>you</u> would, but--that's all you'd get, and all she'd ever get.--You know, she could'nt very well take his fine physique and put it in a pot and boil it for dinner.--Now, Bab, I must admit you're no fool.--If you were, you would'nt be married to Don.---You know just as well as I do, Norine is making a grave mistake.--Archie's mad about her!--You know that, don't you?

Bab Yes, I do; but----

Mrs R There's no "buts",Bab.

MayE (To Mrs R)--Say, you're havin' the front row and the platform and everything that goes with it.--Suppose you give <u>her</u> a chance ter say somethin'.

Mrs R I know what that "but" meant! It won't help matters at all.

MaryE Well, maybe you could shoot it right into her mouth,--whatever you want her ter say.

Bob Now, don't let's get into an argument.--We can take this thing very quietly and sensibly, can't we?

MrsR Not very well with Mary Ellen's interference.

Bob Aunt Mary, will you please----

MaryE All right, Bob. I'll be quiet just as long as I can;but there's no tellin' how long that's gonner be.

Bob Now, Ma, let's come to the point!-What is it you want me to do?

MrsR In the first place I'd like you to tell me--now, I hope you'll tell me the truth---has Jerry ever been in this house?

Bob (Surprised)--In this house? Why no! What makes you ask that?

MrsR I'm inclined to think she sees him some place.

Bob You're thinking all wrong. I know they've quarrelled, simply because he refuses to come anyway near your home or mine, until he is in a position to come to you and Dad and say: I want to marry your daughter.

MrsR He'll never get my consent.

Bob I guess he knows that.

MrsR But you think it won't make any difference---(Mrs R waits for an answer, none coming)---I see----

MaryE You'd be blind as a bat if yer did'nt.

MrsR (Taking a deep breath)--Well, the whole thing's beyond me

MaryE It sure is, Margaret.

Mrs R (Ignoring Mary E's remark)--Don't you think,Bab, you could do something?

Bab How?

Mrs R Talk to her. Try to show her, how foolish she is.

Bab But I don't think she is foolish! She doesn't love arch

Mrs R (Growing angry)--For Heaven's sake, Bb, come down to earth!-- If she marries that jerg --do you think my husband will be able to do for her whatam he's done for Don?---I suppose now she thinks she can start housekeeping with a hundred dollar set of furniture, like you did, and her Dad'll come along and throw it out, and replace it with stuff like this.--(She waves her hand)---Good gracious! Don's been bleeding his father for so much and so long, there is'nt a drop of blood left in him any more.---Nora can't expect a thing. not a thing from us.--(In tone of fury)---We have'nt got it! I would'nt swear this furniture was'nt bought on the instalment plan! I would'nt put it past that idiot husband of mine.---Now it's up to you, Bab! You simply got to help us out!---Nora must marry Archie! She simply must!--Can't you see there is no other way? We're all just a bunch of beggars now.--We can't go on like this!

Bab So you're willing to sell your child-----

Mrs R You should be the last one to say that to me! If we had the money we spent on your husband, maybe I would'nt force my child.

MaryE Maybe's the word.

Mrs R (Ignoring the remark)--Now, use your head! You've got a good one. I know it! Nora does'nt dislike archie,

you'll give in to that.

Bab No, she does'nt.

Mrs R In fact, I heard her tell him, she thinks as much of him as she does of her brother.

Bab But girls don't usually marry their brothers.

Mrs R No, but I know how much Nora loves Don.--If she could only love Archie half as much!--I don't see why she could'nt be happy, and make him happy too.

Bab If you were ever put to the test you'd know the difference between those two kinds of love.

Mrs R You're talking Tommy-rot, not a bit like I expected you to.

Bab It's a very poor compliment to me, if you expected me to talk any different.

Mrs R Oh! Quit that high-falutin' stuff! You're out o' place in it anyway.!--Just try and get this into your head! It's a case of sink or swim!--If Nora does'nt marry Archie, we sink, and you sink with us.

Bab If she does marry Archie, she'll be the one to sink, while you're swimming to safety.--If you think, I'm taking a hand in that, you're making the mistake of your life.

Mrs R You would'nt dare to talk to me like that while you were in my house.

Bab That does make a little difference, and I thank God for it, if it's only to be able to tell you, that you are a heartless woman.

Mrs R A heartless woman!--You dare call me that! A little beggar like you walked into my family and took the cream off of everything we had.--And now, when there's nothing

left for Norine, it's all right with you to see her marry a man, that has'nt the price of a pair of shoes

Mary E (Rising)--I think you said about enough, Margaret.

Mrs R Who are you to tell me----

Bab She's a lady, every inch of her; perhaps not in how she says it, but in what she says.--It would do you a lot of good to copy a little of her style.

Mrs R (Beside herself with anger)--You little impudent---(She is lost for words)--If Don were here you would'nt talk like that!

Bab If Don were here, you would'nt re-arrange my furniture without my permission.

Mrs R Your furniture! Don't make me laugh.

Bab (Temper aroused beyond control)--Now, you listen here! I've stood a lot from you. I suffered the tortures of the damned.--Night and morning I prayed to God to give me the strength and the patience I had to have while I lived in your home.

Mrs R Then why did'nt you get out?

Bab Because I could'nt tell my husband the rotten deal you were giving me. I could'nt hurt him so.

Mrs R The trouble with you in my house was, you had it too good. You was'nt used to it, --so it went to your head,---but I did'nt come here to listen to a lot of rot.

Bab No.--You came here, thinking I'd help you sell your daughter.--Well, here's your answer to that: Norine will never marry Archie! And if you ever succeedd in getting her to change her mind, I'll move Heaven and

Earth to bring her back to her right senses.

Mrs R (Looks at Bab insolently a moment)--I should have known better than to come to you.

Mary E Yes. You should have known better.

(Mrs R stands looking at Bab, and thinking)

Mrs R If I had only used my fists before it was too late!

Mary E It's never too late to do the right thing, Margaret.

Mrs R You shut up!--You block head! You've been takin' in by her her. We've all been taken in by her! I'm just beginning to see it.

Mary E Well, if you're just beginning to see it, and you're so smart, how do yer expect me ter see it, --as, so dumb.

Mrs R (Ignoring Mary E's remarks)--(To Bab)--You don't think it's right for Norine to marry Archigm,do you?

Bab (Emphatically)--No! I don't.

Mrs R Then, why xx have you got him hanging around here all the time?

Bab That's my business.

Mrs R And mine too, since my son happens to be your husband.

Bab (Looks at Mrs R., rather puzzled)--Just what do you mean by that?

Mrs R You know darn well what I mean! I've never come into this house yet and not found Archie here. Why, you made some sort of a date with him right here under my nose.--It's just dawning on me.

(Bab is so stunned, she is lost for words)

Mary E (Her eyes flashing anger at Mrs R)--Margaret! Another word like you just said, and I'll crown you with the first thing I can lay my hands on.

Bab (Takes a step over to Mrs R)--Do you mean to insinuate-

Mrs R I'm insinuating nothing!---I'm telling you straight to your face, you don't want my Nora to marry Archie, because you want him for yourself.

(Mary E staggers, as if from a blow.---Bab's eyes open wide. Her lips begin to tremble as if about to cry. She stops to think a moment, then runs over to door,opens it, turns with flashing eyes to Mrs R.)--

Bab (Shrieks)---Get to Hell out of here, you miserable creature!--Get out! Get out, and don't you dare put your foot in my home again!

(Mrs R, looks first at Bab, for a moment then at Mary E

MaryE Ellen.)

MaryE You brought that on yourself, Margaret.

Mrs R What else could I expect--Would a lady talk like that? (She draws a deep breath)--Well, it's just as my mother used to say: you can't make a silk purse out o' a sow's ear.

Bab (In decided tone)--No. You can't!

Mrs R Are you----(She crosses room to door, head erect, but with an injured air)--Well, we'll see what Don has to say about all this.---(As she is about to leave,she turns back a step)---Mary Ellen you heard her tell me to get to Hell out of this house?)

Mary E Sure I heard! The only trouble was I did'nt hear it soon enough.

(Mrs R.,now furious,l eaves.-----Bab slams door after her, turns to look at aunt Mary, begins to cry hysterically.---Mary E. goes to her, takes her in her arms)

MaryE Don't cry, dawling. She just barks, when she is mad,

but it don't mean a thing--honest, it don't.

Bab (Sobbing)--Oh, aunt Mary! I'm ashamed of myself. I am I am!--I should'nt have---I know, I should'nt have--but I--(A deep sigh)--I just could'nt help it.

Mary E (Patting her gently)--I know, I know, darling.--There--there--don't cry any more. Your eyes'll be al swollen an' red, and Don will want to know what happened.

Bab (Still crying)--He'll know before he sees me. She is going right down to the office to tell him.

Mary E (Stops to think a moment)--She might do that.--Well, if she does, there's two sides to a story--an' I'm the other side.

Bab (Lifting her head from Mary E's shoulder)--But don't you understand, she's going to spoil the nice little blow-out we arranged. He won't take me out to-night, when he hears-----

Mary E (Thinks again for a moment)--I don't think she'll tell him to-day.--She knows it's his birth-day.--She might not.

Bab She does'nt know anything nor anybody when she's angry. You know that better than I do, aunt Mary.

Mary E (Heaves a sigh)--Well, ---(Phone rings)--I'll answer)---(At phone)--Hello!--Hello!--Oh, is that you, Don?---(She places hand over receiver, speaks in a whisper to Bab)---Now, pull yerself together. She can't be down there yet! (She removes hand from receiver, calls loudly)---Bab, Bab, Don's on the phone ---(She speaks into receiver again)--Here's Bab now. She was in with the baby.----(She hands Bab receiver,

whispers)---Now use yer head.

Bab Hello, Don.--Yes.--Yes.--Archie and I had arranged to come down to your office.--Oh! That's fine.--All settled?--That's great!--It's a big case?--I'm so glad. You want to make it a big blow-out?--Well---er--

Mary E (Whispers)-- Careful now, careful.

Bab Talks into receiver)--Listen, darling. Your--your mother was here.--No.--No.--She went to the tailor's and came back.--Yes.--Yes.--She wanted me to do something for her, and I--well, I just couldn't do it.--No.--No.--It led to an argument.--No.--I don't think you will be able to patch it up so easily.--No, not this time.--No.--Where she went? Well, I--I don't know. I--I--told her to go to Hell.--Yes. I did,but-- No, I can't say it was very nice.--Now, Don, use your own judgement!----(Bell rings. Mary E. goes to open door)--Do you think I'd say anything like that if---I can't, Don.--Not on the phone.

(Enter Mary E. and Mr R.---He is carrying a huge box. Mr R. at once begins to open box.--Mary E. is listening to Bab at phone)---

Bab I know,Don. You're between the devil and the deep sea.-I know it's hard on you, darling. but it's just a little bit harder on me, don't you think?--- (Almost agraid to speak the words)--Well---well- now, how about it? Is the blow-out still on--or is it off?---(Her eyes open wide, great joy depicted in them)---Honest! Do you mean it?--Here, darling, catch it!---(She makes the sound of several kisses in the receiver)---

Mr R (Smiling happily)---Still lovers, ain't they?

Bab (Speaking into receiver)--Did you get them?--You darling Yes.--Yes.--Sure.--I'll be ready.--(She gulps)--No, I'm not crying.--On the contrary. I'm just happy.-- Yes, darling.--(She smiles through her tears)--Too happy for words!--Yes, darling.

Mr R (Shaking his head)--Women sure are funny things.----(He takes blanket from box, speaks to Mary E.) Is it the same, Mary Ellen?

MaryE The very same.

Bab (At the phone)---Yes. Seven.--I'll be reddy.-Yes, honey. Yes.--Good-bye.---(She hangs up receiver, looks at Mary E., cries out in ecstacy)---I've won, aunt Mary!--Iv'e won!

(Mr R. tries to show her the blanket. She looks at it a moment, takes it, throws it over head to the couch, grab Mr R. and begins to dance around the room with him, singing:---Tral-lal-la-la-.---Tra-la-la-la-.-----Mr R. is looking helplessly T mary Ellen.---

Mary E No,--she ain't gone crazy, Michael.--She's just come to her right senses.

(Bab kisses Mr R., leaves him, runs over to Mary Ellen, grabs her and begins to dance with her, singing: Tra-la la-la----Tra-la-la-la-, as

Curtain falls.